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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE
OLUME 4 ISSUE 7

LOOD OMEN:
EGACY OF KAIN



THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

JUMPING FLASH 2
IRONBLOOD
FADE TO BLACK
BUBSY 3D
DIE HARD TRILOGY
LOBO
MR. BONES



THE SATURN GETS LOADED

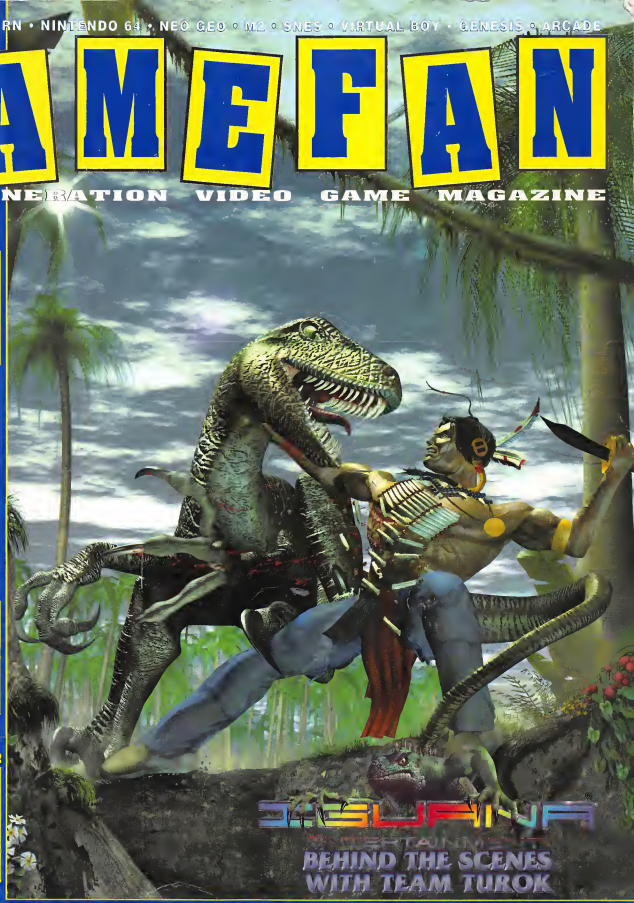
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E3

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JNN SPECIAL REPORT: AN INTERVIEW WITH KAN NAITO CREATOR OF DARK SAVIOR



KEN GRIFFEY, JR.



Better wear gloves for this one. Junior's back with Ken Griffey Jr.'s Winning Run™* baseball.

There's bone-crunching wall crashes, super-human slides, turf-eating dive 'n' grabs (without those unsightly grass stains). Plus, there's a trading feature and new 3-D rendered ACM graphics. All served up with Ken's real-life swing (digitized for your protection).

Looks like another big hit from Ken Griffey Jr.

It's as close as you can get to being Ken without having to deal with The Mariner Moose.

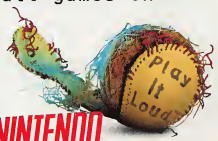


Here's your chance to break more than a few records.



Real stadiums, real uniforms and the real Ken Griffey Jr. (hope that shortstop's wearing the proper protective equipment).

So put those other weak baseball games on the permanent disabled list. 'Cause this time, Ken's playing hardball.



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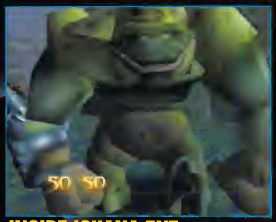
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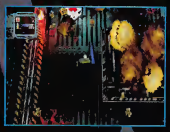
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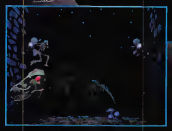


LOADED
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GAMEFAN original art by:



TERRY WOLFINGER



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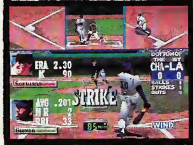
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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

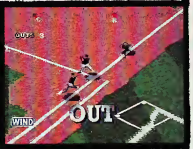
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A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION



It's now Tuesday, May 13th, just a few hours from Day One of the biggest electronic gaming show ever assembled.

After tomorrow's press conferences and kick off parties (Sega's gotta get everybody mellowed out at the House of Blues) the show begins!

A few of the GF staff are already at the convention center setting up the new booth (complete with Monitaur play-stations!) and the reports coming back are very exciting. From the massive Nintendo display, to Sony's catwalks (?) to Scavenger's giant robo-spider it sounds like this one's gonna be a whole lotta fun, and of course work.

Of course, I'm stuck here, putting the final touches on everything aside from the show coverage which we'll button up Saturday night and rush to the printer. Our coverage begins on page 17.

On another note, I'd like to thank those of you who have sent in resumes. I had no idea there would be so many of you who are not only qualified, but willing to relocate as well. I'm reading every single one and will send out a letter to each applicant. Our readers are indeed as enthusiastic as we are... and I can't tell you how much we appreciate the turnout.

Finally, I would like to clear the air regarding MegaFan. It's not that many of you see any problem, it's just that we're a bit embarrassed by it. The free sample in last month's issue was put together on very, very short notice, and, as luck would have it, the printer duped a page. The final product is a little bigger, has even better paper than GF and has since received our (mine and Terry's) final design implementations. MegaFan will be power packed and finely produced. Use the sample for kindling and get ready for the real thing. Enjoy the issue!



Be careful what you say to her, she's hiding a crossbow under that dress.



And for the few who aren't impressed, let's not forget Shadow's **black belt in Ninjitsu**, Ph.D. in computer science, and the two other X-PERTS fighting alongside who can do just as much damage. And all three of these trained government specialists are just waiting for you to control them... pounding terrorists, **torturing the ones who won't cooperate**, hacking Aqua's computer system. All for the sake of National Security. And while you wield your X-PERTS against the bad guys, you'll be doing so with **motion captured SGI rendered graphics**, which means saving the free world will look better than ever... after all, just look how she turned out.





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TEEN T KIDS TO ADULTS

SEGA GENESIS

TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Street Fighter Alpha* - Arcade
3. *Chrono Trigger* - SNES
4. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
5. *Diddy's Kong Quest* - SNES
6. *Sega Rally* - Saturn
7. *Final Fantasy 3* - SNES
8. *Doom* - PS
9. *Killer Instinct 2* - Arcade
10. *Killer Instinct* - SNES



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *KI*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
4. *Tekken 2* - PS
5. *Marvel Super Heroes* - PS
6. *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
7. *Zelda*[64] - Nintendo[64]
8. *Ultimate MK3* - Saturn
9. *Mario RPG* - SNES
10. *Toshinden 2* - PS



DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest

TEAM IGUANA

IGUANA ENTERTAINMENT

1. *Batman Forever* - Arcade
2. *Resident Evil* - PS
3. *Duke Nukem 3D* - PC
4. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
5. *Super Metroid* - SNES
6. *Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits* - PS
7. *Gradius Deluxe Pack* - Saturn
8. *Tekken 2* - PS
9. *Wipeout* - PS
10. *Namco Museum Vol. 1* - PS

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
2. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
4. *Wipeout 2* - PS
5. *Legend of Oasis* - Saturn



6. *Motor Toon 2* - PS
7. *Jumping Flash 2* - PS
8. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
9. *Tekken 2* - PS
10. *Earthworm Jim 2* - Saturn

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Tekken 2* - PS
3. *Die Hard Trilogy* - PS
4. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
5. *Policenauts* - PS



6. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* - Arcade
7. *Snatcher* - Sega CD
8. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
9. *Legend of Oasis* - Saturn
10. *Dragon Force* - Saturn

1. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* - Arcade
2. *Bio Hazard* - PlayStation
3. *Jumping Flash! 2* - PlayStation
4. *Tekken 2* - PlayStation
5. *Thor* - Saturn



6. *Policenauts* - PlayStation
7. *Street Fighter Alpha* - PlayStation
8. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
9. *Rudra no Hihou* - Super Famicom
10. *Ys's I+II* - PC Engine CD-ROM[2]

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Legend of Oasis* - Saturn
3. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
4. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
5. *Kelo Yugekitai* - Saturn



6. *Policenauts* - PS
7. *Die Hard Trilogy* - PS
8. *Genso Suikoden* - PS
9. *Dragon Force* - Saturn
10. *Tekken 2* - PS

1. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
2. *Pilot Wings*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
4. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* - Arcade
5. *Legend of Oasis* - Saturn



6. *Street Fighter Alpha* - PS
7. *Resident Evil* - PS
8. *Tekken 2* - PS
9. *Doom* - PS
10. *Soul Edge* - Arcade

1. *Tekken 2* - PS
2. *Resident Evil* - PS
3. *Intl. Track & Field* - PS
4. *Genso Suikoden* - PS
5. *Policenauts* - PS



6. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* - Arcade
7. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
8. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
9. *Snatcher* - PS
10. *Shin Samurai Spirits* - Neo-Geo

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All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

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Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations

to last month's winners:

First Prize:
David Redondo, Sherwood, OR

Second Prize:
Calvin Fergins Jr, Washington, DC

Third Prize:
Calvin Johnson, Durham, NC

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So welcome back. And plan to stay awhile. Because here in Battle Arena Toshinden 2, these forsaken foes aren't just out to take you down. They're down to take you *out*.

http://www.playmatestoys.com

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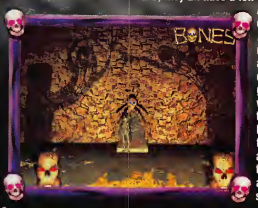


SegaSoft, Sega's newly independent American development house, has finally unveiled their first Saturn title. Designed by Ed Annunziata, who brought us the first *Ecco* game, *Mr. Bones* is unique even by his standards. When complete, *Mr. Bones* will have some 20-30 scenes, using seven different engines. They vary greatly from standard side-scrolling and overhead action to such unusual perspectives as a "worm's-eye view" (watching your character's feet from under a sheet of ice he's standing on) level and a zero-gravity kinetic level that has to be seen to be believed.

As different as the scenes are, they all have a few things in common. All feature main character *Mr. Bones*, the resurrected skeleton of a dead blues musician (all of the in-game music is provided by blues guitarist Ronnie Montrose). And the developers are adamant that all of the scenes will run at 60 frames per second, so there will be no sacrifice of play mechanics. One of developer Zono's best ideas is to let the player interrupt *Mr. Bones*' richly animated movements at any time, so that the player is never forced to wait because of excessive animation (as in *Flashback* and *Out of This World*).

Other forced side-scrolling levels feature two fields of streamed-in FMV, one in the background and one in the foreground, giving the illusion of thousands of layers of parallax. Who knows what Zono can achieve if they can match these impressive looking scenes and *Mr. Bones*' rich animation with equally impressive play mechanics (at this stage *Mr. Bones* seems a bit awkward, but the game is still in its very early stages).

Mr. Bones is a Saturn exclusive (despite rumors to the contrary) that should be hitting home systems this holiday season. With two discs featuring a number of different games, tons of computer rendered FMV and an original blues soundtrack, we'll be watching this one closely.




OH, MY SOD IT'S...

EARTHWORM JIM

WORMING HIS WAY ONTO VIDEOCASSETTE!

He's the stylishly slim star of the galaxy's most radical video game hit and he's coming to home video! Now, the hippest hero ever to slip into a cyber-powered super-suit is about to romp onto the small screen in four exciting new tapes. Each videocassette features two outrageous animated adventures. So worm your way into your favorite store and collect the entire groundbreaking, dirt-cheap, ray-gun-blazin' new series.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

To this month's winners:

First Prize:

Glenn Mazzei, ???

Second Prize:

Mike Wright, Scarboro, Ontario, Canada

Third Prize:

Dmitriy A. Zasoba, Mtn. View, Ca

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SNATCHER (Import) (Sony PS)

Wallpaper, Cursor Color, Target Pointer Change

In the OPTION MENU, Highlight EXIT, and press START. Next, input: UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT on the D-pad.





Now you can enjoy the game in stylish KONAMI fun!

DOOM (Sony PS)

All Weapons, Full Ammo, 200 Health/Armor



Enter these in the password screen to gain access to all of the weapons, ammo and just about anything else you can think of!!

1.) 4JJCLK8W64
2.) MK2V41QBNL
3.) 4KKBMJ7V53
4.) MGZY50TFMP
5.) 4GGFNH!Y46
6.) MHOX6ZSDLN
7.) 4HHDPG9X35
8.) MDX07YMHTR
9.) 4DDHQF4018
10.) MFYZ8XLGSQ
11.) 4FFGRD3Z97
12.) MVB29WPKRT
13.) 4BBKSC628!
14.) MCW1!VNJQS
15.) 4CCJTB5179
16.) MS94VIHMFC
17.) 4SSMBT04YW
18.) MT!3W9GLDB
19.) 4TTLCSZ3XV
20.) MQ76X8KPCF
21.) 4QQPDR26WY
22.) MR85Y7JNBD
23.) 4RRNFQ15VX
24.) MN58Z6CRKH
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32.) M1JCLK8W64
33.) 411W32RCPM
34.) M2KBMJ7V53
35.) 422V41QBNL
36.) MZGFNH!Y46
37.) 4ZZY50TFMP
38.) MOHDPG9X35
39.) 400X6ZSDLN
40.) MXDHQF4018
41.) 4XX07YMHTR
42.) MYFGRD3Z97
43.) 4YYZ8XLGSQ
44.) MV6KSC628!
45.) 4VV29WPKRT
46.) MWCJTB5179
47.) 4WW1!VNJQS
48.) MOSMBT04YW
49.) 4994V!HMFC
50.) M1TLCSZ3XV
51.) 4!!3W9GLDB
52.) M7QPDR26WY
53.) 4776X8KPCF
54.) M8RNFQ15VX
55.) 4885Y7JNBD
56.) M5NRGPW820
57.) 4558Z6CRKH
58.) M6PQHNV712
59.) 4667O5BQJG

1. First level of DOOM 1

30. Last level of DOOM 1

31. First level of DOOM 2

54. Last level of DOOM 2

55. to level 16
56. to level 4
57. to level 30
58. to level 45
59. to level 45

Glenn Mazzei from ????

"Fax us again with your address!"

Street Fighter Alpha (Sony PS)

Fight Akuma 1st!



The CPU Akuma is sooo hard, even on difficulty Level 1 he's a fierce challenge!

**Dmitriy A.
Zasoba,
Mountain
View, CA**



When selecting your character, press and hold L2, R2, and "X." Continue holding until the match starts and he appears...

Alien Trilogy (Sony PS)

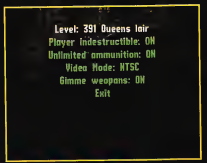
Hyper Cheat Code



Go to the OPTION menu, and simply enter this code for the ultimate cheat! "1GOTP1NK8C1DBOOTSON": (I got pink acid boots on).
1 = I
8 = A

**Mike Wright,
Scarboro,
Ontario,
Canada**

Go back to the MAIN MENU, and select CHEATS. Toggle your Health, Weapon, and even the Level you want to play!



THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ARE THIS MONTH'S SUPER HOCUS POCUS WINNERS! CONGRATULATIONS! AND KEEP SENDING IN THOSE TRICKS!!

1ST PLACE	2ND PLACE	3RD PLACE
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????	SCARBORO, ONTARIO, CANADA	ZASOBA
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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality


SKID


E. STORM


K. LEE


ORION


MR. GOO


TAKUHI


WAKA


TAKAHARA

RE-REVIEW

EARTHWORM JIM 2
SATURN
PLAYMATES-CD
ACTION/GAME SHOW/
SHOOTING/PLATFORM

Since we reviewed *EWJ2*, big improvements have been made during the final stages of development. Originally designed by the wizards at Shiny Ent. (some wacked out beach house full of crazy people), it has been ported and improved upon masterfully by Screaming Pink. Where do they come up with these names?

There are a lot of cows in *Jim 2* and I like cows, so I think you should buy it right away. I also think you should watch the cartoon Sunday mornings after *Freakazoid*.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 9 — **90**

Compared to the 16-bit versions, *Earthworm Jim 2* on the Saturn doesn't have quite the big jump in graphics that I was expecting. Everything else about the game however, is smooth as cow's milk. As expected, the control is perfect, the levels are well thought out and the game has the perfect amount of challenge. As good as the music was on the 16-bit versions, this one surpasses them by a wide margin. Screaming Pink really polished *Jim 2*.

G 7 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 9 — **89**

People say I have a fat head, and this is true. I can't deny it. But Jim has a worm stickin' out of his collar, so lighten up!

Jim 2 is big fun! It ain't exactly the cutting edge in technology, but it's full of the wackiest gameplay this side of a dairy cow. You'll play it once a week, at the very least. Hey, 3 reviews in a row in which a cow was mentioned. That's gotta be some sort of a record.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 9 — **90**

ALONE IN THE DARK 2
SATURN
T•HQ-CD
ADVENTURE

After playing a game like *Resident Evil*, its hard to go back to games like *Alone In the Dark*. *Alone in the Dark 2* suffers from extreme slowdown whenever more than 3 characters are on screen and frankly, the quality of the texture mapped polygons just don't cut it in this day and age. To its credit, *Alone in the Dark 2* has lots of depth and the storyline is quite good, but it's not enough to salvage a good score for this game. Lame music, crappy music, cheap sound effects, I'm sorry but this game just doesn't do it for me.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 5 O 6 — **65**

The Saturn *Alone in the Dark 2* is a really bad version of a horribly dated game. The quest itself isn't worthless, but the ill-conceived interface, excessive loading time, and ridiculous degree of slowdown will prevent you from ever forgetting—even for a second—that this is just a 3rd-rate conversion of an old PC game. Stay far away.

G 3 C 1 P 2 M 5 O 7 — **37**

Look! *Alone in the Dark 2* got an upgrade! Now, instead of the characters being made up of flat-shaded polygons, they've been fully texture-mapped! But, um, why do they look worse? In fact, they look almost frighteningly dead. This, and the extra loading time that went with the "new" look, makes it vastly worse than the original. It has a cool storyline, but I can't stand the play control.

It *had* potential...

G 4 C 3 P 4 M 7 O 7 — **45**

GOLDEN AXE DUEL
SATURN
SEGA AM1-CD
FIGHTING

I don't care where this series turns up, I'll be there to play it! As long as little munchkins squiggle back and forth and magic potions, I'll be there. Except maybe if they make a *Golden Axe Beast of the Dead*. *The Duel* is a solid 32-bit fighter with gorgeous art, great zooming, and an amazing cast of characters. The only drawback is the lack of a combo system, otherwise, *The Duel* is a worthy addition to the series..

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 5 — **80**

I had a lot of fun with *Golden Axe* when I first played it, and it always gives me the warm fuzzies to see the *Golden Axe* characters (or at least their distant relatives) back in another game. Although the control's great, there isn't really enough in terms of play mechanics or balance to hold my interest for too long, especially when I could be playing *Night Warriors*.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 2 — **80**

You know, I really like the idea behind *Golden Axe: The Duel*, using features found in other fighting games (scaling, SF moves, and 6 button controls). Add in real little *GA* treats, and this game had a lot going for it. Sadly, the end product turned out to be ultra-boring. There's minimal depth, and almost no combos. *Duel* isn't a bad game, it's just boring. So if you're not a fighting game freak, give it a try. But if you love the genre, this is one title on which you might want to pass.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 5 — **77**

SHELLSHOCK
SATURN
US GOLD-CD
SHOOTING/SIM.

It's a rap tilled slammin' good time with Core's *ShellShock*. That is, if your just wild about hip-hop, and garden variety 3D shooters. The overall presentation in *ShellShock* is good. Nice between-level storylines, with shops and whatnot. Car 3D environments teeming with military goon-wanna-drill-yagons and pretty cool ops are all in here. Problem is, it's just, well, sorta tist. And the music... forget it. I still love Core and their groglves them. it you must have one, go with the PS version.

G 6 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 6 — **68**

ShellShock is a solid tank blaster for the Saturn. Although the street talkin' characters and the attempt at an ethnic feel didn't appeal to me (to0 corny), the actual gameplay was challenging and pretty addicting. The graphics are a bit on the pixelly side and should have been a lot better. I like the fact that besides blasting everything in sight, you have to balance your tank's upgrades and preserve your armor. That may be a small detail, but it adds a lot of strategy to this game. Listen to hip-hop music, so the tunes were great for me. Good game.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 6 — **78**

While *ShellShock* does have its obvious shortcomings, it does have some strong points as well. It's up to you which way to lean on this one. For starters, if you like rap and hip-hop, and millions do, you'll love the music. Gameplay-wise, hills and valleys you will not find, but vast areas full of cat and mouse gameplay you will. So it's really your call. I enjoyed the game but probably wouldn't buy it unless there was a sudden drought.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 7 — **75**

TIME KILLERS
GENESIS
T•HQ-16M CART
FIGHTING

The first game that almost made me pack my bags and leave the video game industry forever. *TK* combines heinously ugly, NES-quality graphics with no control and the choicest "voices" to ever defile an eardrum. There's really no sense to it now, as the whole blood-and-guts fighting thing has run its course. *MK* introduced true carnage and remains the only game that has done it right, with story and depth to back up the pain.

G 2 C 1 P 2 M 0 O 2 — **12**

Why, oh why did this game come back from the grave to haunt Genesis owners everywhere? *Time Killers* was originally released in 1994, when the arcade game came out and it's even worse today on the Genesis. The graphics look so crappy, the animation is choppy by today's standard and the sound is sub-par. Honestly, I can't think of a reason to recommend this game to anybody. I could see somebody wanting to play *Time Killers* 2 or 3 years ago when the arcade game was out but not now. Pass.

G 5 C 5 P 4 M 4 O 4 — **40**

Wbaw!!! What a refreshing change of pace! I'm really getting tired of all these bitchin' games like *Tomb Raider*, *Dark Saviour*, *Virtua Fighter*, Koio. I really needed this stinking log to snap me back to reality! Why, in this day and age would anybody want a *bad* game where dismemberment is the main theme? The arcade was novel a few years back, but a conversion this late in the game, and a really bad one at that, disturbs me. I wouldn't play it if it was the last game on Earth.

G 1 C 2 P 4 M 3 O 4 — **15**

Let's just say this game has some problems. Sure, it has lots of cool features like...Mode 7. It has a lot of Mode 7. Actually, too much Mode 7! Besides this nice headache-inducing feature, there's not much else to say. The character's lame, the enemies are hard to see, and the music's bad. Only recommended to those who have a high tolerance for spinning colors, or people with stockpiles of aspirin.



G 6 C 8 P 7 M 5 O 9 **73**

(Sigh)...Where to start? First of all, Mo Hawk (the character) is about as lackluster and outdated as they come. Mohawks (the haircut) may have been semi-cool in 1989 but not now. Although the control is actually quite good and the game has great speed, the "don't I blend into the background nicely?" enemy sprites interrupt the overall flow of the game. Even worse, the music is highly irritating and the gameplay, flat-out, just isn't any fun at all. Avoid this game like the plague.



G 5 C 8 P 4 M 0 O 5 **40**

An example of what *not* to do with Mode 7. This is the type of game I would have expected in the SNES' infancy—a title that tries hard to put an impressive hardware effect to some gameplay use. Combine a lame engine with an almost unplayable game and one of the lamest characters in gaming history, and you have *Mo Hawk & Headphone Jack*. Pass...



G 6 C 6 P 4 M 0 O 5 **60**



When it comes right down to it, I was sad to see the Jaguar go. I know, it was the instrument of much frustration, but that odd cool game every once in awhile would have been kinda cool. Sort of like a US version of the old SuperGrafx, a similarly high potential system that saw little to no action. Of course *FFL* would have gone down the chute as another nearly worthless title. The funky polygons coupled with the lame play mechanics and downright hilarious samples just well, make me laugh.



G 4 C 5 P 0 M 0 O 0 **30**

Fight for Life isn't as snapped as the preview versions suggested it would be, but it's darn close. First of all, we have a nearly unplayable game because of the seemingly random, rapid angle switches. Add this to almost nonexistent gameplay and music consisting of one terrible electric guitar sample, and we've got a winner! Farewell, Jaguar.

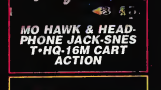


G 6 C 6 P 3 M 2 O 5 **55**

What an appropriate send-off for the Jag. A terrible system's terrible last hurrah. *Fight for Life* is really, really hard to be a good 3-D fighter, with interesting features like an interactive replay and learning your opponents' moves, but it falls short in the visual and sound departments. And the gameplay... you don't even wanna go there. Sorry, Jag owners... it's over.



G 6 C 4 P 4 M 6 **65**



Hey, who snuck this SNES game on to my Saturn? It's bad enough being a carbon copy (a fresh squeezed one that is) of the original, but what the heck am I doing holding a Saturn pad playing a legendary Nintendo series? Kinda creepy. My Saturn spit it out. So I can't play mine any more.



G 6 C 8 P 4 M 6 O 6 **65**

Wow, *MegaMan's* lost some weight... This version has been somewhat squished, but it is a (literally) pixel-perfect conversion, minus the slowdown. The new intro and soundtrack are lovely, but this is still a SNES game. A pretty good SNES game, but a SNES game nonetheless.



G 6 C 6 P 8 M 0 O 4 **70**

This is a great game, but it's no different than the SNES version of *MegaMan X2*. That, in itself, is not a bad thing (after all, the SNES game is pretty good) but with 2 new 32-bit *MegaMan* games coming out at the end of the year, it's a big mystery to me why Capcom would even go to the trouble of converting this (now old) game. The new FMV sequences are OK, and although the music is now CD quality, the actual tunes lack the appeal of *MegaMan* games past. Not bad, just not 32-bit quality.



G 8 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 3 **77**



Wow, a Japanese platformer with a cute little main character, what will they think of next? Luckily, *Kelo Gekitai's* strength isn't just with little Rami, but its strong play control. This is a *good* platformer, and coming from me (who normally strongly dislikes the genre), this means a lot. It's tons of diverse levels (including a few shooting ones), huge bosses, and lots of personality. It's cool!



G 8 C 9 P 8 M 0 O 9 **85**

I am truly in my element. Masterful platform gameplay, gorgeous hand drawn graphics, lush animation, blazing color, and a great story to boot. *Kelo* is a perfect example of old school gameplay made great by today's killer hardware. *Kelo Gekitai* is balanced perfectly, has memorable music, and one of the coolest cute characters ever. Rami is one cool little chick. If you play imports, here's one you can't pass up.



G 9 C 8 P 9 M 0 O 7 **90**

Kelo Gekitai is an awesome action platformer with just the right difficulty curve, beautiful graphics, excellent music, and a lot of diversity. The quest is long and entertaining, and the shooting scenes always make for a nice change of pace. My only problem: Rami is just a little TOO cute... I actually feel personally responsible and somewhat guilty whenever she gets hit. Poor Rami.



G 9 C 8 P 9 M 0 O 2 **92**



I kind of enjoyed G² in the arcades, but the more I think about the series, the more pointless it becomes. I mean, it's not very interactive,(even by FMV game standards), and it's really short. *Gaurb* looks nice, but quality CG is in everything these days... I'm just not impressed by Namco's little "beat your co-pilots" attempt at increasing the life of their game. Ask your local video store if they rent by the hour.



G 9 C 9 P 1 M 8 O 4 **59**

OK, I have to agree with everybody else, Galaxian³ is WAY too short. I mean, after spending more than 70 bucks for a game, it would be nice if it lasted longer than 10 minutes. Sadly, that is precisely the dilemma that G³ is plagued with. Namco tried to lengthen the experience a bit by including 2 games in one, but I'm still disappointed. Although the FMVs is good and the music is outrageous at times, G³ even lacks the intensity of *Starblade* at times. A great game to play...once.



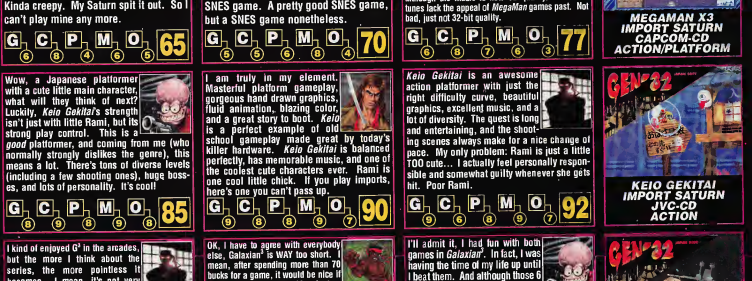
G 7 C 3 P 8 M 0 O 6 **68**

I'll admit it, I had fun with both games in *Galaxian³*. In fact, I was having the time of my life up until I beat them. And although those 6 minutes were a blast, I'll never play it again. Why did Namco bring this out? Sure, it's cool to play those Theater 6 titles without paying 5 bucks a game, but what about re-play value? Just to make my money back, I'd have to play through both games four times, but why would I want to?



G 9 C 5 P 8 M 0 O 5 **70**







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{ IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, }

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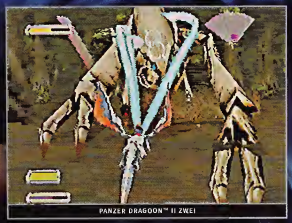
BEAUTIFUL, NAKED WOMAN

ON THIS PAGE.



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BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN™ (REMIX) BY TAKARA™


PANZER DRAGOON™ II ZWEI



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EXPO E3 LOS ANGELES

This year's E3 was perhaps the greatest ever. For starters the Nintendo 64 was finally on display for all to see. I don't know a single man, woman, or child who could look at Super Mario 64 and not want to give Mario a big fat hug. The game is simply stunning. Feelings are mixed regarding the analog controller with about half of us loving it and the other half still reaching for the D-pad. Nintendo, however, even with a dozen N64 titles on display did not "steal" the show. Over at Sony a Bandicoot named Crash had crowds astonished as he leapt through some of the most spectacular 2 and 3D gameplay ever imagined. Psygnosis showed up with some force as well with Wipeout XL, and Formula 1, to name only a few. Meanwhile over at the Sega booth, yet another spectacle was taking place as Nights lit up the faces of show-goer's with some of the most unique and entertaining gameplay seen to date on any system. Sega showed up with their strongest line-up yet and made everyone take notice. But the big three were not alone. Third party games never looked better as you'll see in these pages. Crystal's Pandemonium and Kain, Core's Tomb Raider, Boss' Spider, and Scavenger's Tarantula, are but a few of this years high yield...

Editors' Top 10



1. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
2. Mario 64 (N64)
3. Nights (Sat)
4. Pandemonium (PS)
5. Tomb Raider (PS)
6. Legacy of Kain (PS)
7. VMX Racing (PS)
8. Blast Corps. (N64)
9. WaveRace 64 (N64)
10. Spider (PS)



1. Nights (Saturn)
2. Mario 64 (N64)
3. Tomb Raider (PS/Sat)
4. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
5. Wipeout XL (PS)
6. Dark Savior (Saturn)
7. Virtua Cop 2 (Saturn)
8. King's Field 2 (PS)
9. Tarantula (PS/Sat)
10. Revelations: Persona (PS)



1. Nights (Sat)
2. Mario 64 (N64)
3. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
4. Tomb Raider (PS/Sat)
5. Tobal No.1 (PS)
6. VF Kids (Sat)
7. Wipeout XL (PS)
8. Pilotwings 64 (N64)
9. Bedlam (PS/Sat)
10. Pandemonium (PS)



1. Mario 64 (N64)
2. Nights (Sat)
3. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
4. Virtual On (Sat)
5. Legacy of Kain (PS)
6. Tomb Raider (PS)
7. Policenauts (PS)
8. Genso Suikoden (PS)
9. Pandemonium (Sat)
10. Sonic X-Treme (Gen)



1. Super Mario 64 (N64))
2. Pilotwings 64 (N64)
3. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
4. Formula 1 (PS)
5. Mission: Impossible (N64)
6. Nights (Saturn)
7. Wipeout XL (PS)
8. Killer Instinct 64 (N64)
9. Viper (PS)
10. Turok: Dino Hunter (N64)



1. Super Mario 64 (N64)
2. Pilotwings 64 (N64)
3. Killer Instinct 64 (N64)
4. Crash Bandicoot (PS)
5. Wipeout XL (PS)
6. DKC3 (SNES)
7. GoldenEye (N64)
8. Mission: Impossible (N64)
9. Spider (PS)
10. Nights (Sat)

Game of Show: SUPER MARIO 64



#1



#2 CRASH BANDICOOT



#3 NIGHTS



#4 TOMB RAIDER



#5 PILOTWINGS 64



#6 WIPEOUT XL



#7 LEGACY OF KAIN



#8 KILLER INSTINCT 64



#9 TIE:PANDEMONIUM/ MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE



#10 SPIDER

Super Mario 64















Without a doubt, Mario 64 was the highest profile game of the show, and the waiting period to play was often as much as a full half hour. No mystery why: the graphics are awesome, the worlds huge, and the level design is classic Miyamoto. The first time you see SM64 is hard to describe. It is indeed everything Nintendo said it would be.

This version is much further along than the one we played at the Shoshinkai, and features many more enemies, obstacles, power-ups, and special effects... One thing we're glad hasn't changed is Mario himself—I was afraid they might try to Americanize him, but luckily, he's still the new hyper-cute Mario that makes a "hoo" when he jumps, gets his head stuck in the show, and says "Mama mia!" when he dies.

A few of us found the control a bit awkward and would rather play with the D-pad: its hard to achieve the precision this game requires with an analog pad, and the necessity to frequently switch camera angles tended to get in the way of the game playing experience. Otherwise, Mario's the N64's prize gem, and a serious contender for game of the year.

Shadows of the Empire







Shadows of the Empire, based on the recent hardcover novel, has four different game modes including the Snowspeeder sequences from the last version, plus new Doom-style sequences.

Pilotwings 64







Just as Pilotwings was a benchmark for SNES special effects, (ah, remember when pixelly mode-7 impressed us? How simplistic we were...), *Pilotwings 64*'s visual splendor probably won't be matched on the N64 for quite some time. A confirmed launch title.

Cruisin' USA





The good news: So far this is a 100% perfect conversion of the arcade hit. The bad news: So far this is a 100% perfect conversion of the arcade hit. Yep, Cruisin's here, and at this early stage, has the same excessive pop-up as the arcade. It still has strong play mechanics, but not the flash you'd expect of the N64's first driving title. Hopefully, Nintendo will attempt some sort of update before the launch...

Super Mario Kart R

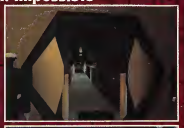






Super Mario Kart R wasn't playable yet (all we got were a few seconds of video tape), but this'll be a must-buy for Mario Kart fans. Solid analog-control and 4-player split screen action should make this a memorable 1st-generation title.

Mission: Impossible





Falling somewhere between Doom and Alone in the Dark, Mission: Impossible sounds like one of the more ambitious projects slated for the N64. The interesting thing about it is that unlike your usually excessively powerful hero characters, you're not too much stronger than a regular man, and must use your spy skills to strategically avoid conflict whenever possible... Should be very interesting.

Kirby's Air Ride




Like Wave Racer, Kirby's been through some changes since we've last seen it... it's now a 4-player simultaneous air-boarding game... Sounds cool, but they'll need to work on the frame rate before this one's finished.

ROBOTECH-GAMETEK




Body Harvest




Body Harvest (not playable at the show) sounds and looks kind of similar to Return Fire, but geared more for 1 player and packed with over 130 vehicles to control or destroy. DMA's first N64 game also features lots of levels and a very non-linear structure.

StarFox 64





Starfox... WHEN? And where? SF64 is another title that currently exists only on tape, but it's one of the ones that I'm most excited about... it's games like this that the Nintendo 64 was made for, after all. So far, it looks pretty awesome... Your ship looks cool and the one or two bosses they've shown look amazing. Just move the fog-line back a few yards, 'kay?

GoldenEye





There were only a few seconds of GoldenEye shown on the tape running at the show. It appears to be a Doom-style game with a more flexible trigger, a la Virtua Cop. The graphics are early, and they've only shown one game mode, while a variety of levels and perspectives should be in the final.

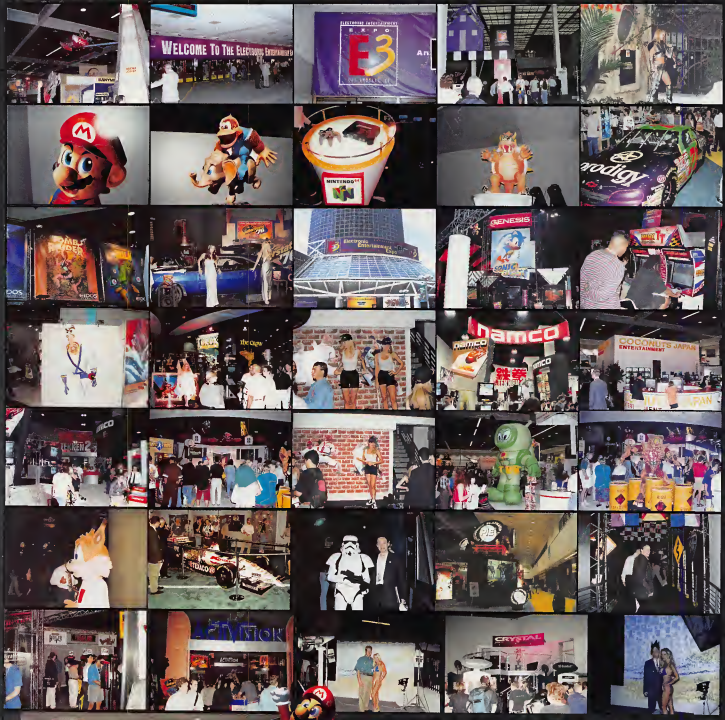
WaveRace 64



Readers with good memories will notice that this looks nothing like the WaveRace 64 we've shown in past issues. The old WaveRace has evidently become F-Zero 2 (!), and this one's being rebuilt from scratch. This version's very early, and the graphics are not final... We can say, however, that of all the playable games, this one seems to be the most at-home with the analog stick, and does an amazing job at capturing the feel of the open ocean.



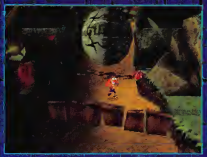
THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS (WELL, MAYBE NOT THE SOUNDS) OF THE 1996 E3



Video game shows are strange places. Thousands of people, young and old, herd into huge rooms full of video games, bright lights, and beautiful girls. Companies spend countless dollars showing their wares, and when all is said and done, it's just us sitting in front of a TV with a controller in our hands... Ain't life great...



The last place you could find a GF editor at the '96 E3. How 'bout SD Monitaur... Snapped!!







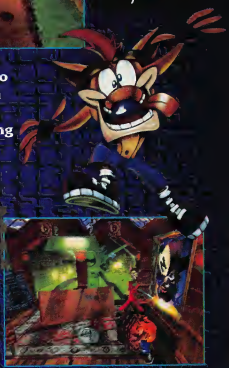
PlayStation



Of all the games at the E3, Crash Bandicoot, even more so than Mario, defied all logic (in my humble opinion). Graphically superior to anything on the show floor and with innovative, yet traditional

CRASH BANDICOOT

gameplay to boot, Crash is an action platform gamer's dream come true. Naughty Dog and Mr. D. Siller have certainly outdone themselves and in my opinion, everybody else. While many of my comrades see Mario or Nights as king, they all see Crash Bandicoot as a giant leap forward for the PS as well. Crash is truly a class act.











More Twisted, more Metal. TM2 is part one gone mad. Better graphics, better gameplay... the list is long.





TOBAL NO.1



Tobal No.1 is Square's PlayStation debut, and has wisely been picked up by Sony for release here. Tobal runs at 60fps in the PS' 512x416 resolution mode—the only other game that can claim this is Crash Bandicoot. Tobal is unique in that you can move in any direction, similar to WarGods or Virtual On. This game also features the character designs of Akira Toriyama, author of Dragon Ball and character designer for Chrono Trigger and the Dragon Quest series.



EPIDEMIC

Kileak 2 (re-named Epidemic... fitting) is headed our way and not a moment to soon. It's been a while since a good 3D-sci-fi/Action/RPG has crossed our path.

Sony gets the award for best surprise announcement... Only 'cause they're the only company who had ANY sort of surprise announcement. Sony of America is releasing SNK's translations of their popular arcade titles, namely Samural Shodown III, King of Fighters '95, and Real Bout Fatal Fury. Kof '95 and Samural III were actually there at the show, too, although Samural III was very early. We should have an import review of Kof '95 next month.

Anyway, Crash was a masterpiece—fun to play, full of variety, and visually astounding. Luckily, Sony seemed to realize this, and made Naughty Dog's first game since 3DO Way of the Warrior the centerpoint of their booth. Tobal No.1 was another surprise... It's still in the fairly early stages of programming by Arika (Akira Nishitani's new start-up, featuring many ex-Namco and Sega employees), and will be released by SQUARE in Japan later this year, and by Sony here. The characters (who have not yet been texture-mapped) were designed by Dragon Ball Z creator Akira Toriyama... Speaking of SQUARE, they were nowhere to be found, and neither was FFVII. Also mysteriously absent was Arc the Lad, but rumor has it that the game Sony intends to release here is actually Arc the Lad 2, which will probably turn out to be a much better choice.

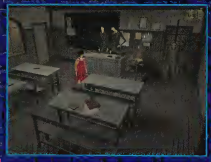
Sony's 2-player water/snow/swamp bike/jet-ski/racing game, Jet Moto, also looks impressive. Produced by Sony and programmed by Singletrac, this is the same team that brought you Warhawk (our choice for PlayStation game of the year, 1995). The graphics are at a really early stage, but the final version, its creators promise, will be able to handle up to 20 bikes on screen at once, and 2 player split-screen play.

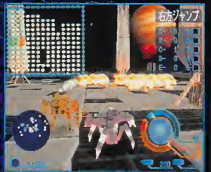
Various Japanese acquisitions: Horned Owl, Jumping Flash! 2, "Exploration/Adventure" Aquanaut's Holiday, Strategy/Sim Carnage Heart, Epidemic (the English name for Kileak the Blood 2), and Bogey: Dead 6 (English name for Sidewinder). Also there was Beyond the Beyond, which Sony was making a surprisingly big deal out of (they had it on more screens than all of Sega's RPGs combined!)... No sign of Wild Arms, though.





Jet Moto



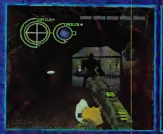


Carnage Heart





NCAA GameBreaker

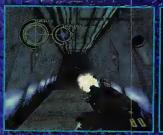


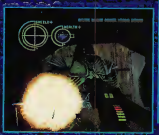


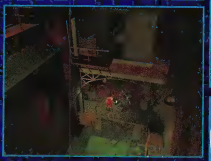




Tenka/Psygnosis

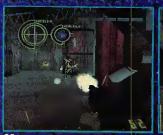








City of Lost Children







2 Xtreme

KOF '95









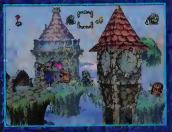
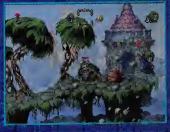


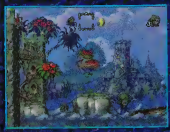
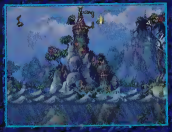
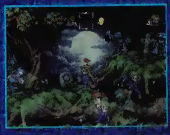

Formula 1










Lomax in Lemmingland

Demolition Derby 2S


Wipeout XL


SEGA

Nights

Easily the star of Sega's booth, and one of our choices for Game of Show, Nights was truly the most revolutionary game at the E3. Never before has any game given such a feeling of freedom... Such insane graphics, such a cool main character. Most importantly, with Sega's



ingeniously designed analog pad. Nights is one of the best-playing games in recent memory.

Visually, Nights is gorgeous, if a tad confusing. The colors, made entirely of hues that could never actually exist in nature, are bright and beautiful, and the game moves along at a dizzying pace, the only graphical distraction being some pop-up around the edges. The boss encounters are particularly impressive... you'll just have to see it to believe it.



Bug Too!, besides being a whole lot more ambitious than BUG!, features two new characters, one which has to go (he's the disco goof). Otherwise, this sequel will surely blow minds with its insane polygon engine and hardware defying graphics. Look for more Bug Too! in August.



Bug Too!

















Three Dirty Dwarves

Reminiscent of those great 'CORE' games of old ('cept with 32-bit punch), Three Dirty Dwarves is the ultimate real time cartoon. You control three of the wackiest characters ever to walk a software street doin' crazy, crazy stuff. This refreshing new game will be seeing a lot more space in the August GF.















Virtua Cop 2

Although Sega announced the Saturn translations of a number of late '95 Model 2 games (including Fighting Vipers, Virtual On and Manx TT), Virtua Cop 2 was the only one to materialize. While that was pretty disappointing, the quality of VC2's translation definitely bodes well for the rest of the crop. Only the first half of level 1 is in here, but it's lookin' pretty darn good...









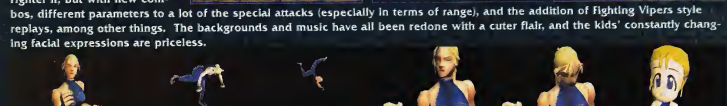






Virtua Fighter Kids

Sega's just-released (in Japan) ST-V arcade game has already been loaded onto a Saturn CD and is ready for you to enjoy, complete with one of the most nauseatingly cute CG intros ever. The play mechanics are basically identical to Virtua Fighter II, but with new combos, different parameters to a lot of the special attacks (especially in terms of range), and the addition of Fighting Vipers style replays, among other things. The backgrounds and music have all been redone with a cuter flair, and the kids' constantly changing facial expressions are priceless.







Dark Savior

Sega claims that the Saturn will have at least 10 RPGs out by the end of the year, and it actually looks as if they might meet that goal. Working Designs was showing Rayearth and Dragon Force, Sunsoft is looking for a distributor for Albert Odyssey Gaiden (which they hope to have

Albert Odyssey Gaiden

out by Christmas), and Sega was showing an English-translated Legend of Oasis. The biggest (and best) surprise was Climax' Dark















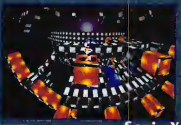
Magic Knight Rayearth



Savior, officially picked-up by Sega and already halfway translated into English! The Japanese release has been pushed back 'til September, a Climax rep told us, and the US version will be out by the holidays. Beautiful!



Dragon Force







Both new Sonics are way early, but look pretty cool already.



Sonic X-Treme & Sonic Blast





Sunsoft's Galaxy Fight





NFL '97



NBA Action



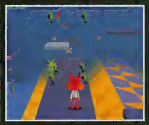
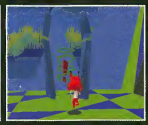




THIRD PARTY

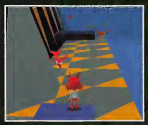
Accolade





Bubsy 3D







Legends '97








Acclaim

Battle Monsters






Dragonheart



X-O Manowar



QB Club '97



Space Jam



V-Tennis



Ironblood



Killing Zone




Activision

Blast Chamber



Hyper Blade



Zork Nemesis



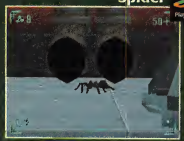
THIRD PARTY

BMG/BOSS





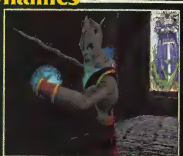

Spider






Crystal Dynamics

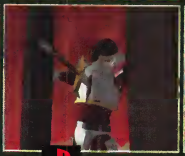


Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain

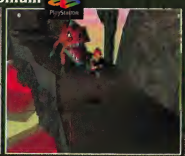






Pandemonium


Coming Soon...



Capcom

Major Damage




Marvel Super Heroes

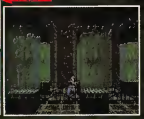



Star Gladiator






Extreme Dreams

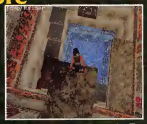
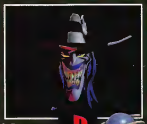


Sirens



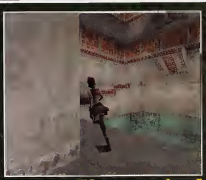
Caps

Core



Tomb Raider



Crimewave



Swagman




Electronic Arts

Syndicate Wars



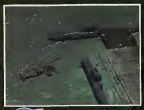



PGA Tour '97



Soviet Strike





NHL '97




Triple Play '97



Madden '97



Madden '97

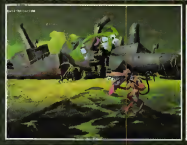


Andretti Racing




THIRD PARTY






Interplay




Clayfighter 3-M2

Although C3 was nowhere to be seen at the E3, we've shown you Red Asphalt and Casper, so we thought this would be the perfect opportunity... WOW!

Konami



Contra: Legacy of War



Policenauts

Capcom




Dark Forces — Rebel Assault




Hercules Adventure — Ball Blazer

Genso Suikoden




Playmates




Burning Road — Powerslave







Playmates

VMX







Tekken 2 — Ridge Racer Revolution

Ocean

PlayStation

Tunnel B1



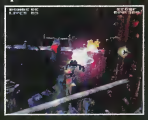




PlayStation

Viper





Cheesy

PlayStation



PlayStation

Waterworld







Ubi-Soft











Rayman 2





PlayStation



Street Racer





PlayStation

Viacom

Aeon Flux







DeathDrome



The Divide



PlayStation

Virgin



Spot

PlayStation



NHL



NHL

PlayStation



PlayStation

Black Dawn



PlayStation

Nanotech Warrior





Disruptor

PlayStation



Universal



Vic Tokai — Dark Rift



Vic-Tokai's great looking (and playing) new fighter, Dark Rift, wraps up this issue's E3 coverage.

Look for extended news and coverage next month as we continue to update you with more in-depth coverage on this year's best games and consoles.

P.S. Regretfully, MegaMan 8, Castlevania, and Final Fantasy 7 were not showing at this year's E3. Our cover went to press prior to the show and thus the text is, well, maybe we were just a bit too speculative. We also somehow failed to hook up with Shiny for some planned Wild Nines screens. We'll have those along with GF's first ever PC coverage of MDK in the August GameFan.

1996 software lineup

Acclaim
PlayStation
NBA Jam Extreme
Betman Forever: The Arcade Game
Frank Tbomas "Big Hurt" Baseball
Iron man/XD Manowar in Heavy Metal
WWF: In Your House
Space Jam
BattleSport
Bubble Bobble
Bust-A-Move 2
The Crow: City of Angels
Dragonheart: Fire & Steel
Killing Time
Magic: The Gathering
NFL Quarterback Club '97
StarFighter
Striker '96
WWF "In Your House"
V-Tennis
Saturn
Alien Trilogy
Batman Forever: The Arcade Game
Battle Monsters
BattleSport
Bubble Bobble
Bust-A-Move 2
The Crow: City of Angels
Dragonheart: Fire & Steel
Iron Man/XD Manowar In Heavy Metal
Magic: The Gathering
Mortal Kombat I & II Duo
NBA Jam Extreme
NFL Quarterback Club '97
Space Jam
StarFighter
Striker '96
Virtual Dpen Tennis
WWF "In Your House"
Nintendo 64
Turok The Dinosaur Hunter

Accolade
PlayStation
Bubsy 3D
Vandals
Legends '97

Advanced Productions
SNES
Zanex The Revolution

Activision
PlayStation
Blast Chamber
Hyperblade
Zork Nemesis
Saturn
Blast Chamber
Zork Nemesis

American Laser Games
PlayStation
Shining Sword

American Softworks
PlayStation
Dark Net
Perfect Weapon
Hardcore 4x4

American Technos
PlayStation
Strikepoint

ASCII Entertainment
PlayStation
King's Field 2

Atlus Software
PlayStation
Megami Tensei: Persona

Bandai America
PlayStation
Power Rangers Zero
Power Pinball
SNES
Power Rangers ZED
Battle Racers

BMG Interactive
PlayStation
Race & Chase
Firo & Klawd
Spider
Saturn
Spider
Nintendo 64
Silicon Valley

Capcom
PlayStation
Buster Bros. Collection
Marvel Super Heroes
Dark Stalkers
Werewolt: The Apocalypse
Star Gladiator
Major Damage
Fox Hunt
Street Fighter Alpha 2
Saturn
Buster Bros. Collection
Street Fighter Alpha 2
Fox Hunt
Major Damage
Marvel Super Heroes
Werewolf: The Apocalypse
SNES
Marvel Super Heroes In: War of the Gems

CAPS
PlayStation
Sirens
Extreme Dreams

Crystal Dynamics
PlayStation
Legacy of Kain
3D Baseball
Pandemonium
Ghost Rider
The Punisher

Data East USA
PlayStation
Creature Shock
MVP Baseball '96
MVP College Football '96
Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
Saturn
Creature Shock
MVP Baseball '96
MVP College Football '96
Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

Electronic Arts
PlayStation
Triple Play '97
NHL '97
Madden NFL '97
Andretti Racing '97
PGA Tour '97
Shredtest
Soviet Strike
Syndicate Wars
Fade To Black
Saturn
PGA Tour '97
SNES
Madden NFL '97

Fox Interactive
PlayStation
Die Hard Trilogy
The Tick
Independence Day
Aliens vs. Predator
Saturn
Die Hard Trilogy
Independence Day
Alien vs. Predator
The Tick

Gametek
SNES
Frantic Flea
Nintendo 64
Robotech: Crystal Dreams

GT Interactive
PlayStation & Saturn
Hexen
Quake
Tigershark
Rebel Moon Mayhem
Youngblood
Duke Nukem
Bedlam
Nintendo 64
Ultra Combat

GTE Entertainment
PlayStation
Hard Boiled

Hot-B USA
PlayStation
Big Bass World Championship

Interplay Productions
PlayStation
Red Asphalt
VR Golt
VR Pool
Tempest X
VR Tennis
Nintendo 64
Ultra Descent

Jaleco USA, Inc.
PlayStation
DreamKnight
Tokyo Highway Battle
Slam Dragon

JVC Musical Industries, Inc.
PlayStation
Impact Racing
Mission: Deadly Skies
Raw Pursuit
The Adventures ot "Iron John" Hawk: Mystery on Diablo Island
Saturn
Mission: Deadly Skies
Varuna's Forces
Impact Racing
Raw Pursuit
The Adventures ot "Iron John" Hawk: Mystery on Diablo Island

Kemco
Nintendo 64
Top Gear 64

Koei
PlayStation & Saturn
Mystery of the Seven Mansions
P.T.D. II

Konami America
PlayStation
Contra: Legacy ot War
Suikoden
Pinky & The Brain
Project Overkill
Crypt Killer
Kumite: The Fighter's Edge
Lethal Enforcers 1 & 2
The Final Round
NFL Full Contact
Broken Helix
Speed King
International Track & Field
Saturn
NFL Full Contact
Broken Helix
Policenauts
Pinky & The Brain
Project Overkill
Crypt Killer
Kumite: The Fighter's Edge
Lethal Enforcers 1 & 2
Contra: Legacy of War

LucasArts
PlayStation
Ball Blazer Champions
Rebel Assault II
Dark Forces
Herc's Mythical Adventures
Saturn
Herc's Mythical Adventures

Maxis
PlayStation
Sim City 2000

Mindscape
PlayStation
Raven Project
Necrodome
Intamous Golf
Steel Harbinger
Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat
Nintendo 64
Monster Dunk

Namco
PlayStation
Museum Volume 1
Museum Volume 2
Ridge Racer Revolution
Tekken 2
Soul Edge

Natsume
SNES
Lufia 2: Rise of the Sinistrals

Nintendo of America
Nintendo 64
Super Mario 64
Pilotwings 64
Shadows of the Empire
Cruisin' USA
WaveRace 64
GoldenEye
Blast Corps
Super Mario Kart R
Killer Instinct
Body Harvest
Kirby's Air Ride
Star Fox 64
SNES
Ken Griffey Jr's Winning Run
Kirby Super Star
Tetris Attack
Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble
Virtual Boy
Bound High
Dragon Hopper

Ocean
Nintendo 64
Mission: Impossible
PlayStation
Cheesy
Tunnel B1
SNES
Lobo

Panasonic
3DO
Obelisk
Ultimate MK3
Olympic Summer Games
Olympic Soccer

Phillips
PlayStetion
QAD
Down In The Dumps
Demon Driver
Micro Machines

PlayMates Interactive Entertainment
PlayStation
X-treme Motocross
Burning Road
Powerslave
Burning Road
VMX Racing
Duckman: The Legend of the Fall
Saturn
Powerslave
X-treme Motocross

Psygnosis
PlayStation
Destruction Derby 2
Formula One
Wipeout XL
Monster Truck Rally
Tenka
Adidas Power Soccer
Isle of Dr. Moreau
City ot Lost Children
Lomax in Lemmingland
Alphastorm
Discworld 2
Rodney Matthews

ReadySoft Inc.
PlayStation
Kingdom Shadoan

Rocket Science
PlayStation
Ganymede
Rocket Jockey

Scavenger
PlayStation & Saturn
Terminus
Scorcher
Amok
Tarantula
Angel
Aqua
Pyro
Gemini
Sniper
Spanish Blood
Into the Shadows

Sega
Saturn
Sonic X-Treme
Virtual On
Baku Baku
Gun Grifton
Fighting Vipers
Virtua Cop 2
Nights
Bug Too!
Three Dirty Dwarves
Virtua Fighter Kids
Heart of Darkness
Legend of Oasis
Golden Axe
Dark Savior
Guardian Heroes
Mr. Bones
NBA Action
Manx TT
Daytona USA: Champion Circuit Edition
NFL '97
World Series Baseball 2
Worldwide Soccer II
Genesis
World Series B-ball '96
Sonic Blast
Marsupilami
X-Women
Arcade Classics
Vectorman 2
X-perts
Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble
Virtua Fighter Animation

Sony Computer Entertainment America
PlayStation
2 Xtreme
Aquanaut's Holiday
Carnage Heart
Beyond the Beyond
Spawn
Bogey: Dead 6
Jet Moto
Jumping Flash! 2
MLB Pennant Race
NCAA Football GameBreaker
Project: Horned Owl
Twisted Metal 2: World Tour
Crash Bandicoot
Tobal No. 1
Epidemic
NFL GameDay '97
NHL Face Dff '97
Samurai Shodown 3
King ot Fighters '95
Real Bout: Fatal Fury

Spectrum Holobyte
PlayStation
Top Gun
Star Trek: The Next Generation
Vette '96
Gunship 2000
ABC's Monday Night Football
ABC's College Football

Sunsoft
PlayStation
Jewels of the Dracle
Saturn
Albert Ddyssey Gaiden
Galaxy Fight
Jewels ot the Oracle

Take Two Interactive Software
PlayStation
Ironblood

Tecmos, Inc.
PlayStation
Tecmo Super bowl
Tecmo Stackers
Super Eagle Shot Golf

T•HQ
PlayStation
Floating Runner
Robo Pit
SNES
Bass Masters Classic: Pro Edition
College Football USA '97
Mo Hawk and Headphone Jack
Mr. Do
NHL '97
Dlympic Summer Games
PGA European Tour

Trimark
PlayStation
The Hive

UbiSoft
PlayStation
Rayman 2
Street Racer
Pod

Universal Interactive
PlayStation
Disruptor

US Gold
PlayStation & Saturn
Dlympic Soccer
Tomb Raider
Dream Team 3
Dlympic Multisports
The Incredible Hulk
Swagman
Crime Wave
Machine Head

Viacom New Media
PlayStation
Aeon Flux
Dragon's Run
MTV's Slamscape
Snow Crash
The Divide: Enemies Within
DeathDrome
Viacom New Media

Vic Tokai Inc.
Saturn
Wet Corpse
Dark Rift
Abuse

Virgin Interactive Entertainment
PlayStation
Black Dawn
Spot Goes to Hollywood
NHL Powerplay
Grid Runner
Golden Nugget
Nanotech Warrior
3-Decathlon
Grand Slam '96
Command & Conquer
Lands of Lore 2
Saturn
NHL Powerplay
F1 Challenge
Grid Runner
Hyper 3-D Pinball
Spot Goes to Hollywood
Grand Slam '96
Command & Conquer
Nintendo 64
Freak Boy

Williams Ent. Inc.
PlayStation
Area 51
Final Doom
NHL Dpen Ice
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
War Gods
Robotron X
NBA Hangtime
Saturn
Area 51
Ultimate MK3
Nintendo 64
NBA Hangtime
War Gods
Mortal Kombat 64
Doom 64
Wayne Gretzky Hockey 64
SNES
NBA Hangtime
Arcade's Greatest Hits
Ms. Pac-man
Ultimate Mortal Kombat
NBA Hang Time
Genesis
Arcede's Greatest Hits
NBA Hangtime

Working Designs
Saturn
Magic Knight Rayearth
Dragon Force















PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER(S) - PIC/Exact/Nine Man

PUBLISHER - SCEA

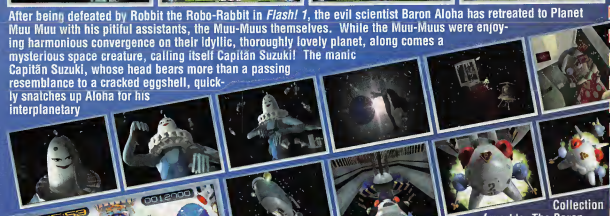
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - TBA

After being defeated by Robbit the Robo-Rabbit in *Flash! 1*, the evil scientist Baron Aloha has retreated to Planet Muu Muu with his pitiful assistants, the Muu-Muus themselves. While the Muu-Muus were enjoying harmonious convergence on their idyllic, thoroughly lovely planet, along comes a mysterious space creature, calling itself Capitän Suzuki! The manic Capitän Suzuki, whose head bears more than a passing resemblance to a cracked eggshell, quickly snatches up Aloha for his interplanetary



Collection of worlds. The Baron barely manages to escape, and begs the new-and-improved Robbit V2.0 to save his precious Planet Muu Muu!





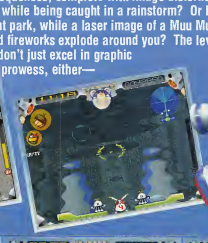


TAKAHARA
You say Moo Moo, I say Muu Muu.






In actual gameplay, *Jumping Flash! 2* is virtually unchanged. Instead of Jetpods you now collect Muu-Muus brandishing "E," "X," "i," and "T" signs, and the familiar power-ups and special weapons are present. The real attraction here is the level design. To put it bluntly, it's absolutely brilliant. One level can consist of *Doom*-ish corridors, outdoor scenes with hyper-realistic snow blustering about, and incredibly authentic underwater sequences, complete with image distortion. How about ascending a massive tower while being caught in a rainstorm? Or leaping throughout a deranged amusement park, while a laser image of a Muu Muu is projected on the clouds above and fireworks explode around you? The levels don't just excel in graphic prowess, either—

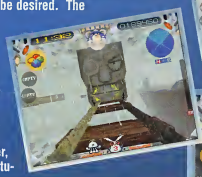
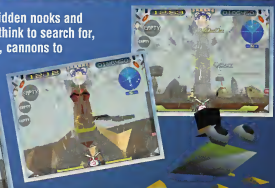








each actually taxes your gaming ability with hidden nooks and crannies, doors above your head you'd never think to search for, Muu-Muus on moving objects, roller coasters, cannons to fire you from place to place, and elevators to ride.

As you can imagine, the graphics in *JF!2* leave little to be desired. The effects in this game are beautiful, ranging from a complete distortion/ripple effect of everything underwater, ruffling flags virtu-







ally bursting with realism, *Soul Edge*-like motion blurs, waterfalls, rainbows, and the above-mentioned rain and snow. The overall visual presentation of *Flash! 2* is much better than the original, with a higher frame rate and better textures with little to no pixellation.

The sound and music are pure *Jumping Flash*, with each stage having its own wacky ethnic tune. The most exciting audio feature here, however, is the position-based sound effects. If you're near a waterfall, you'll hear it gurgling. If you're by a fire, you'll hear it crackling. If you're near a flag, you'll hear it fluttering.



And, feature of features, if you're near a Muu-Muu, you'll hear it wretchedly wailing "Muu Muu!"

JF!2's twice as long as the first adventure. Once you "finish" the game, six more worlds appear, albeit based on the first run-through. The import package includes a European version of *Jumping Flash! 1* with each *JF!2* purchase... complete with levels never-before-seen in the Japanese or American versions.

We'll have that and a lot more when we review *JF!2*.








PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - TBA



ORION
You think I'm smart? Well, I'm not! I just have a lot of fat in my head.



Puzzle games. They're fun, they're addictive, but lately seem to be following a trend. Hey! I know, let's have a falling-block game that uses silly-looking aliens instead of geometrical shapes! While nothing's wrong with *Tetris*, *Baku Baku Animal*, *Dr. Mario*, or the hundreds of other games in this genre, they all have one thing in common—a lack of innovation. How many times will I be faced with shapes falling from the ceiling, my only goal making them link and disappear? What happened to *Trampoline Terror*? *Zoom*? You know, puzzle/action games? Just when I thought those days were gone forever, and I should just be preparing for *PuyoPuyo 14*, Virgin announced *Grid Runner*.

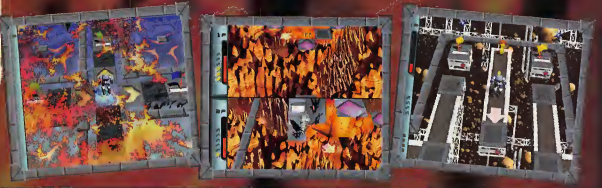


GRID RUNNER

Visually similar to *TT* or *Zoom*, *Grid Runner* is presented in an overhead perspective. The object is to run around different "mazes" and collect a certain amount of flags to advance. Each level has a computer controlled dude, and he has the exact same goal as you. Adding in even more fun, only one of you can snatch the flags at once, the person who's not "it." So now while running around the maze, you're not only faced with collecting the flags, but with a game of Tag. There's also plenty of obstacles in every level, all there to slow you (or your opponent) down, and make it easier for the person who's "it" to catch up.

Grid Runners is shaping up to be an interesting action/puzzle game. It's unique, challenging, and packed with addictive gameplay, but check back here next month for the final verdict.

-Orion







We just received the first playable version of *Ironblood*, Take 2 Interactive's AD&D-licensed medieval fighting game. Though the shots might not appear as visually stunning as *Tekken* or *Toshinden*, *Ironblood* looks as if it will more than make up with substance what it lacks in flash.

As a fighting game, its most outstanding characteristic is the number of characters—16 totally different characters that are immediately playable from the time you start the game up, and four awesome-looking bosses waiting at the end. Its other great strength is in the Campaign Mode, where you can pick a party of warriors and fight it out against your opponent's selections. It sounds a lot like the team modes that appear in other games, but goes much further in depth. Your team can acquire magical artifacts, gain additional team members, and choose when and when not to lock swords with their rivals. In many ways, it's almost like a simple AD&D campaign.

With a large variety of characters, magical spells, special attacks, magical items, and various backgrounds, gamers probably won't tire of *Ironblood* quickly. Our big question is about the play mechanics... our version was far too early (no magic or special attacks) to judge. We *can* tell you that even at this early stage, it features some amazing programming; polygons never break up, pixelize, or become distorted. And the motion-captured animation is highly realistic; Take 2 actually hired one of those freaky groups of people who reenact medieval battles to get the weapon techniques right. One other aspect that sets *Ironblood* apart from the crowd is a force fields that surround the ring (there are no ring outs), which changes the dynamics of the battle a great deal.

Sound good? *Ironblood* will be hitting your PlayStation late this summer (M2 maybe in '97, maybe never). We'll be back with more as this title develops. -Takuhi

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

Ironblood

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TAKE 2 INT.

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '96



Ironblood does the license justice!



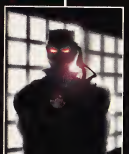
DIE HARD



PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PROBE
PUBLISHER - FOX INTER.
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - MAY



TAKUHI
PROBE IS DEFINITELY ON A ROLL.

My first thought upon seeing the engine used in the first game of Die Hard trilogy is that we're gonna be seeing a LOT of rip-offs of this one. The engine is ingenious—a full polygon environment that strips away or makes transparent any polygons that are in your way, so that you can go anywhere and never have your view obstructed. And it's all highly interactive—you can blow away windows, obliterate parked cars, shoot the leaves off of plants, all sorts of fun things. Transparencies and light-sourcing are used heavily, and the explosions and grenade blasts are amazing. Though the game was far from final, it's already an astounding technical achievement.

The action is intense as well—you must search each of over 20 floors of Nakatomi Plaza, eliminating the terrorists and saving the hostages... You've got a variety of guns and grenades at your disposal, and Probe's added some very clever play mechanics, like the way you can see the view from yours enemies' crosshairs when they're attacking you from behind.

Only one annoyance: the lines our hero John McClane is constantly slinging. It seems as though they've hired an actor who sounds somewhat like Bruce Willis to repeat lines from the movie totally out of context. As a result, we get such treats as "Take THAT under advisement" literally every time he throws a grenade, or "No turkey, but it's Christmas!" at the beginning of every other level. It's hard to imagine these making sense in ANY context, and they're just a tad less relevant when you hear them every 30 seconds. Even more chilling is the line "Sorry, pal," when you mistakenly (or not-so-mistakenly—heh heh) blow away a hostage. Guess New York Cops never did have a habit of letting guilt slow them down...

That tiny complaint aside (just had to get it off my chest...), this is the most innovative of the three games, and probably the most in-depth. Though only 4 levels are complete, I'm eagerly awaiting the later scenes... If they can provide the touch of variety (in play mechanics) that the first 4 seem slightly lacking in, this game could be the best of the trilogy.













DIE HARD TRILOGY

DIE HARD 2



With a touch of tweaking and slightly longer levels, *Die Hard 2* would have made a very impressive arcade game. The graphics are superb, easily eclipsing *Horned Owl's*, and the variety of settings is more than adequate. The best part, though, is the level of interaction—you can shoot ANYTHING. Shoot Coke machines for health, shoot ceilings to knock out ceiling tiles, shoot anything glass to break it—really, you can shoot basically ANY texture in ANY level and put realistic looking bullet holes and cracks in it. Also impressive is the gore: Blood from shot enemies and hostages splatters against the walls and dries there; not an excessive amount, just enough to make you say, "Wow." It's just so cool to survey an area you've spent 20 or 30 seconds fighting in, and see it totally wrecked. Blood on the walls, glass on the floor, bullet holes in everything, sprinkler systems going... Such fun!



Die Harder doesn't add too much to the genre (what shooting game does?), but it does give you some freedom to look around to the left and right. Unfortunately, I can't judge the control yet, as the game has not yet been optimized to work with either the mouse or Konami gun. And as everyone who's ever tried knows, playing shooting games with a control pad is a harrowing ordeal. If, in the final version, the aiming with the gun is accurate, and you can make the screen scroll by just moving the gun itself, this game would be well worth the cash all by itself.













DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE



The driving game based on *Die Hard With a Vengeance*, is the least finished of all the games. Only three levels are playable, but the first of those three is another amazing achievement. You have to race your cab around a highly realistic model of New York (realistic except for the lack of traffic, of course), picking any route you want to get to the bombs in time. There are a number of views, including a cool (but hard to control) overhead scene.

The rest of the vehicles haven't been programmed in yet (just a cab and police car so far), but the very cool mix of racing all over the city to find pre-set bombs (which you "disarm" by slamming into them with your car) and *Chase HQ*-style battles with moving enemies is already a ton of fun. The city design is very cool, with trains, subways, cross-traffic, lights, parks, etc., and a great variety of textures, so you don't feel like you're just driving through the same block over and over again. The game already looks and feels significantly better than *Twisted Metal*, and the lines from the actor impersonating Samuel L. Jackson are a lot cooler than John's lines in the first one.



















Believe it or not, every single one of the games in *Die Hard Trilogy* are very, very good, and each has enough length and innovation to be a game in itself. Though this version isn't finished yet, Fox is clearly giving Probe all the time they need, and I have no doubt that the game's going to get even better. Final viewpoints next issue! -Takuhi

RAVEN PROJECT

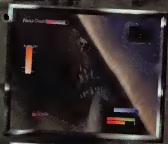






Developed by Cryo (makers of *Timecop* for the SNES and *Megarace* for the 3DO), *The Raven Project* is Mindscape's first endeavor in the tough PS 3D-shooting category. Let's have a look and see how it's going shall we?

In 2278, mankind no longer rules the earth. Betrayed by a traitor from within, humans have been conquered and subjugated by the Armids, an ancient alien race. The humans' last hope is a small band of rebel freedom fighters, who must outwit and outgun the aliens to seize control of The Raven, the ultimate, deep space battle fortress. It's not a unique story, but it's interesting nonetheless.



Depending on the mission specs and environment, players operate in one of three combat modes: ship-to-ship space combat, ground combat in an armed mechanized warrior and air-to-air/ground sorties in a space fighter. In each mode, players can choose one of 5 craft: the Lancer, Vampire, Scavenger, Shepherd or Lynx. Each craft has unique assets and capabilities as well as certain weaknesses.



Early missions take place on Earth, in and around locales such as San Francisco, the Mojave Desert, and the churning high seas. Once on board The Raven, players can be sent anywhere, from orbiting the moon to the surface and mines of Mars.

Graphically, *The Raven Project* is looking great. The surface textures are saturated with color and eerily gouraud shaded similar to, but hillier than *Krazy Ivan's*. The beefy-looking mech's are fluidly animated and both you and the enemies fire blazing weapons with spectacular results. Light source shading is almost constant.



In the control department, things take some getting used to, with separate buttons for acceleration, speed, and stationary shooting. A training mode is generously featured to ease you into each vehicle.



Cryo's *TRP* shows great promise.







PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CRYO

PUBLISHER - MINDSCAPE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - MID JUNE



TAKAHARA
More high powered shooting from the U.K.



PREVIEW

LAYOUT - REBOUS

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - DELPHINE

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JUNE



SKID
PC on my PS is OK! Fade to Black makes me pray for rain.









Delphine Software International, the French software company responsible for *Out of This World* and *Flashback*, is readying the third installment in the series for the PlayStation. Previously reserved for PC gamers only, *Fade to Black* is DSI's first 3D venture, the results of which are highly impressive.

It's easy to see that *Fade to Black* is not just another run-of-the-mill sequel, but a game that expands on the universe and gameplay elements alike.

In this latest chapter, we find Conrad Hart amidst yet another disaster. He's been floating hopelessly in outer space for uh, er, about 50 years! Actually, he has a Game Boy... No, he's in a deep cryogenic slumber in a lone space pod, drifting around the cosmos just waiting to be reeled in... and reel him in they do. As luck (and video game designers) would have it, Conrad's pod is captured by his arch-enemies, the Morphs. The Morphs haul him off to the lunar penitentiary, New Alcatraz....easy to get in, slightly difficult to get out.



As Delphine's protagonist is left to rot in eternal space hell, an unknown human rebel kills a Morph guard and unlocks Conrad's cell. In exchange for his help, the rebel will allow Conrad to escape with him in a cargo vessel. Luckily, the rebel left Conrad a 9mm gun and a pocket communicator to help him along the way.

As I said before, *Fade to Black* is entirely 3D. As with most three-dimensional games these days, every sprite is made up of texture-mapped polygons. This allows complete freedom of movement and camera angles, lending a cinematic effect to the

















action. Most of the action is second person (slightly above and behind), a welcome sight these days. I always need to see my character.

When Conrad pops a cap, the camera shifts to an over-the-shoulder viewpoint, optimum for blasting bad guys. It's a complete graphic package if you catch my drift.

Rotoscoped characters are out and 3D motion capture is in, giving the game a smooth, refined look and feel.

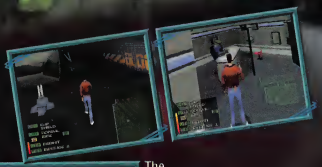
Except for the FMV sequences, all the music in *Fade to Black* is hardware produced, PCM samples.

FADE TO BLACK











The music is more mood driven and ambient, which fits the disposition of this game perfectly. Instead of blasting in your ear "HEY, THERE'S A BAD GUY WAITING FOR YOU AROUND THE CORNER!" the music in FTB taunts and suggests, enhancing the suspense instead of ruining it.

As it stands, *Fade to Black* has the potential to become a big PlayStation hit in 1996. Electronic Arts is on line for a Summer release.













BUBSY 3D



PREVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EIDETIC

PUBLISHER - ACCOLADE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLYRS. - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

We were lucky enough to catch Accolade on a recent trip to California (to scope out their E3 space) and coaxed them in to stopping by the GF offices with a preview disc of *Bubsy 3D*. This new 3D action platform (scheduled for release on both the PS and Saturn), will be the Bubster's first true sequel. I say that because Mike Berlyn, the designer of the original *Bubsy*, is back and in good company. Mike co-founded Eidetic, the new company behind the cat. Although still very early, *Bubsy 3D* already shows vast "go anywhere" level design and creative gameplay elements. The flat-shaded polygon graphics, rather than the now-familiar texture mapped, were chosen by Chuck Jones who's overseeing the art direction. Flat-shaded polygons better portray his cartoon style and if there's anyone whose cartoon style you must respect it's Chuck Jones . Mr. Jones grew to legendary status with such blazing toons as the *Road Runner*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Daffy Duck*, and *Porky Pig*. You can see a lot of *Road Runner* influence in the graphics already. The gameplay in *Bubsy* is on line to match the quality of the art direction with creative 3D gameplay that places you inside huge complex environments. Here you roam free battling those frisky Woolies in a whole new way. Basically, if you can see it, you can go there, and you can see far in this game. Getting there is actually half the fun. Overhead platforms both station-





IT'S SINK OR SWIM FOR THE BUBSTER









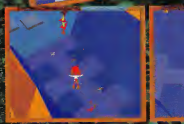
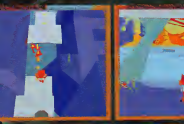
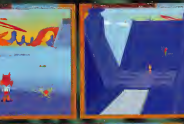


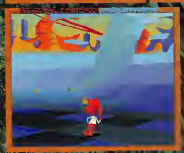


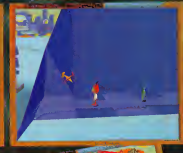



ary and moving, towering peaks which you can fly (or glide) off of and vast canyons fill each area. And there is no time limit so you can explore for as long as you like. There are many secret areas to be discovered, teeming with one-ups and other Tender Vittles. (I'm entitled to one cat joke.)

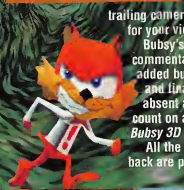
Woolie elimination can be performed by either the traditional pounce, or by positioning yourself behind an electron and projecting it at the enemy in your sights. A

trailing camera is generously provided for your viewing pleasure. Bubsy's infamous idles and commentary have yet to be added but are planned. Music and final control were both absent as well, but you can count on a lot more coverage as *Bubsy 3D* approaches preview form. All the makings for a *Bubsy* comeback are present and accounted for.










GameFan speaks candidly with one of the first Nintendo 64 developers, Iguana Entertainment. Herein lies the answer to the burning question on every gamer's mind... Was the Nintendo 64 worth the wait? *-By K. Lee*

The Nintendo 64 has been one of the most promising yet ambiguous video game hardware projects in gaming history. Back in 1993, Nintendo and SGI spoke boldly about their bid for "the future of video games." Hard-core gamers around the world marvelled at impressive-sounding stuff like hardware anti-aliasing, mip-mapping, perspective-correct textures, etc., etc.

In need of clarification is exactly what these features accomplish in a game environment. Here at GF we have taken strides towards educating ourselves on these new features so we can pass that knowledge along to you, our valued reader.

But what about the video game developers who are only recently getting acquainted with 32-bit dev-systems? They are, after all, the final word. Do *they* feel the N64 is significantly different (superior/inferior) to what's out there already? And even if it is superior, how difficult is it to harness these new powers considering the limitations of the cartridge format? If the new features of the N64 are too difficult for developers to implement in games, you might as well not have them at all.

To obtain the answers to these questions (and countless others), GF traveled to Iguana Entertainment in Austin, Texas and spoke to the development team working on their first Nintendo 64 title, *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*.

CG=Craig Galley-Technical Director
DD=David Dienstbier-Project Manager/Designer-*Turok*

Part 1: David Dienstbier

The interview starts as we're browsing through the new Nintendo Power checking out some new Mission: Impossible *shots...*

GF: What do you think about these shots of Mission: Impossible *for the N64?*

DD: It doesn't look like there's anything really outrageous going on there. It looks like they might be using a little bit nicer lighting effects than what we're currently using. *Turok* uses omni-directional lighting effects right now, but as the game nears completion, we'll be using better effects. When you use very simple geometric shapes like this (points to railing along the steps) and gouraud shade it, it automatically gives it a smooth, rounded look. It's pretty simple to do.

GF: Does the N64 really have real time ray tracing

DD: (pauses) Yes. It's very limited, but you can use ray tracing in N64 games.

GF: How about phong shading?

DD: No, there's gouraud shading but no phong shading on the N64. If you look at an object in 3D Studio or something and you switch between gouraud shading and phong shading, you'll see very little difference between the two. For games, gouraud shading is more than sufficient.

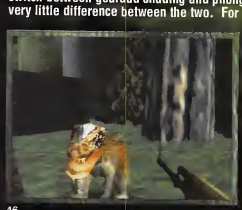
GF: Can the N64 do specular lighting in real time?

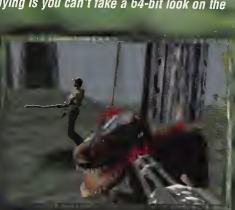
DD: (pauses) Yeah, you can. The more lighting you do, and the more effects you use, the more processing time is required to do them and that can effect your frame rate or how many sound effects you use or the number of polygons you use. It's a balancing act.

GF: What would prohibit Turok *from being done on say, the PlayStation? Licensing restrictions with Nintendo, or perhaps something else?*

DD: Basically, my biggest problem with taking *Turok* and trying to do it for the PlayStation or Saturn is that, from the outset, the game was designed specifically for the Nintendo 64. Any conversion that we would do to one of the 32-bit systems would invariably be vastly inferior. This game is going to get a reputation for being visually stunning. *Turok* is full of all this great stuff and fantastic effects. It just wouldn't have the same effect on the PlayStation. That's not to say the PlayStation can't do a lot of great stuff, but we have written, designed, and coded the game (and that includes all the effects) for the Nintendo 64. When you do a conversion of a game that has a reputation for being of a certain visual quality and you try to convert that onto another system that cannot do it quite as well, the result is disappointing.

GF: So what you're saying is you can't fake a 64-bit look on the PlayStation?







DD: Well, the PlayStation is perfectly capable of calculating the number of polygons we're using in this game. But as far as a lot of the other effects we're using in *Turok*, the PlayStation can't handle it. Obviously the PlayStation doesn't anti-alias, the z-buffering things are not automatic, so all the polygons have to be sorted in the program, which can be a headache. The way the N64 handles transparency effects and opacity mapping and stuff like that is a lot more simple on this machine than the PlayStation. The overall look of the game wouldn't be nearly as nice on the PlayStation. I don't know how many Nintendo 64 games you've seen video of so far, but I feel the video quality of this thing is amazing. I mean, it's so crisp and clear, the hardware really makes it easy to give the best possible visual presentation of your game. As I said before, if you are planning to release a game across several platforms you design a game that runs optimally on all systems. But if it's a night and day difference between a N64 version and a PS version, nobody who's seen the N64 version is going to want to get the PlayStation version first, because there's going to be too big of a difference.

***GF:** So we won't be seeing* Turok *on 32-bit systems due to the technology rather than the license.*

DD: Yes.

***GF:** Which hardware features are you using in* Turok*?*

DD: All of them.

***GF:** So* Turok *does use gouraud shading, anti-aliasing and mip mapping?*

DD: Yes.

***GF:** How has it been working on the Nintendo 64?*

DD: It's been great. You know, any time you get involved with a new piece of hardware, there's gonna be a lot of "feeling out" and testing before you get to know the machine well enough to get the results you're looking for. We are very fortunate that we have programmers who are experienced with 3D design and have now come to know the N64 quite well.

***GF:** Are you impressed with the N64?*

DD: Yes.

***GF:** In what way?*

DD: Well, the video quality of the N64 really does approach the quality of a high-end graphic workstation, in that the real-time images are very SGI-like. It's fabulous. For a $250 dollar machine, it's quite amazing, actually. The single most impressive thing that you notice about the N64 is the quality and clarity of the images on screen. This thing is unbelievable.

***GF:** What do you think of the N64's cart format?*

DD: A lot of people are screaming and yelling and howling because Nintendo chose to stick with a cartridge format and from a pure, bulk of memory standpoint, yeah, that's a downer. From the standpoint of music, we cannot use redbook audio. With a CD, we could pack half the disk with sound, so there's another disadvantage. You have to bear in mind how much memory sound samples can take up. If you take into account the number of animations, the number of creatures, the number of effects we're going to be doing in *Turok*, our sound effects list becomes huge right off the bat. So you have to be careful when managing your sound in your memory by combining really high sample rates (which take up more memory) with lesser sample rates (which take up less memory). For instance, certain types of instruments inherently sound distorted whether you use a high sample rate or not. What you can do is use a low sample rate for a certain type of sound that falls within a certain frequency range. On paper, the sample with a lower rate is technically inferior to a high quality one. However, to your ears they sound the same and you also use less memory at the same time. We use a high sampling rate for the sounds that are very sharp and crisp and a lower sampling rate for the low, bassy sound. The overall result is quite impressive.

Part 2: CRAIG GALLEY

***GF:** How does the Nintendo 64 rate in comparison to other systems currently available?*

CG: Compared to everything else out there, the Nintendo 64 is the best machine. I like just about everything about it on a technical level. It's very well engineered. It's very easy to work with and very easy to program on.

(cont'd.)









GF: Would you compare it to an SGI Reality Engine?

DD: Yeah, but it's a scaled down version of a Reality Engine. It doesn't do a million polygons per second.

GF: How many polygons can you get out of the N64?

DD: It varies, really. It depends on the types of polygons you're doing. It you're doing anti-aliasing, if you're doing z-buttered, texture mapped, gouraud shaded polygons. It you turn these features on or otf, it can increase or decrease the number of polygons. The size ot the polygon matters as well.

GF: Besides the actual features (mip-mapping, anti-aliasing, etc.), are there some features that both the N64 and PlayStation share that are done better on the N64 or vice versa? For example, both systems have Alpha Channel effects, but I understand the Nintendo 64 can control its Alpha Channel effects pixel for pixel, while the PlayStation can't. Is that true?

DD: Yes. The N64's Alpha Channel can also be z-buffered while the PlayStation's can't. The N64's Load Management feature is done in software.

GF: So Nintendo's "Load Management" feature is a fabrication?

DD: (laughs) It's not so much of a fabrication, but you can implement Load Management through software. The hardware facilitates that.

GF: You were saying that the N64's Alpha Channel effects can be z-buffered. How does that work?

DD: Within a texture map, you can assign an Alpha Channel setting and give it a value of zero to 255. The zero setting is completely transparent, while the 255 setting is completely opaque. So you can have polygons with pixels that fade trom solid to transparent within the same sprite and on all three planes (x,y and z dimensions).

GF: So there are 256 different levels of transparencies on the N64?

DD: Yes.

GF: How many does the PlayStation have?

DD: Around 32. Overall, the Nintendo 64 generates a much smoother, and more defined real-time image than what is possible on the PlayStation. You get the anti-aliasing, you get the true perspective texture-mapping, all the filtering and the interpolation. These features make all the difference. If you get close to a texture on the N64, it looks soft.

GF: We have heard rumors that there are some features in the N64 that you wouldn't even find on an SGI Onyx. Is that true?

DD: There are some things that are different. For example, the Alpha Channel effects work differently on the N64 than some ot the high-end graphic workstations. They made it easier on the N64 so designers could implement it in their games easier. The hardware is actually very similar to the (SGI Onyx) Reality Engine. It has a high-end graphic workstation design, but since it's aimed at a lower market, some ot the features have been scaled down a bit.

GF: So would you say the N64 is pretty much a Reality Engine designed to run at TV resolution?

DD: Yes, although some things have been scaled back on the Nintendo 64. The resolution is lower because it has to run on a TV. There's less texture memory because the images don't take up as much resolution as they do on the Reality Engine.

GF: Taking the resolution and texture size out of the equation, is the Nintendo as powerful as a Reality Engine?

DD: It's comparable. The speed is almost there. It's getting close to that, yeah.

GF: How big of a jump is it from the PlayStation to the N64?

DD: It's ditticult to quantify from a technical point. An easier way to judge the differences would be to look at an image. When you look at an N64 game on screen, it just looks beautiful, whereas the PS looks kind of, uh... the colors are kind of strange on the PlayStation.

GF: As far as the N64's sound hardware goes, how would you rate it against the others?

DD: The Nintendo 64's sound hardware is very simple: You have 2 hardware channels, left and right. You can also create more channels in software (up to 100 channels) but that effects how many polygons you can display. The more channels you have, the less polygons you can render. The less channels you have, the more polygons you can render. It's a question of balance, really.

GF: What are the advantages and disadvantages to that?

DD: It's a very flexible sound system; it's cheap. However, since it's integrated with the graphics hardware, it can take away from the visuals.

DD: The N64 is capable of producing CD quality sound, but the memory it would take to store that is outrageous.

GF: So the bigger the ROM size (cart/bulky disk), the smaller the trade-off is between the music/graphics?

DD: Yes, the more memory we have to work with, the more memory we can allocate towards things like sound and graphics.

GF: You mentioned earlier that programming games on the N64 is a balancing act. Do you find that you have to sacrifice more things on this machines than other machines, less things, or about the same?

DD: I would say that you sacrifice less on the N64 than on other machines. We've been impressed with what we got and, quite frankly, expected the hardware to be less than what we got. They delivered more than what they said they were going to deliver—which is unusual for a home manufacturer.

GF: You guys are one of the few developers who have hands-on experience with the Nintendo 64 and the Matsushita M2. Tell us: Which 64-bit system do you feel is more powerful?

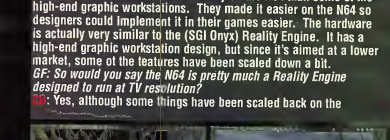
DD: The Nintendo 64 is better than the M2.

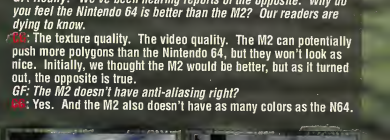
GF: Really? We've been hearing reports of the opposite. Why do you feel the Nintendo 64 is better than the M2? Our readers are dying to know.

DD: The texture quality. The video quality. The M2 can potentially push more polygons than the Nintendo 64, but they won't look as nice. Initially, we thought the M2 would be better, but as it turned out, the opposite is true.

GF: The M2 doesn't have anti-aliasing right?

DD: Yes. And the M2 also doesn't have as many colors as the N64.













It has 15-bit color for graphics.

GF: How many colors does a PlayStation have?

DD: It has 15-bit color as well.

GF: So would you say the M2 is basically a PlayStation with more polygons?

DD: (pauses) The textures look nicer on the M2 than the PlayStation and it has many of the same features as the N64, but the overall quality would look cleaner and smoother on the Nintendo machine.

GF: Interesting. Say, could we check out the N64 controller?

DD: Sure, hang on a sec.... (long wait)... Here you go.

GF: Cool! Do you like the design of this controller?

DD: Oh absolutely. It's the best, by far. I mean, in my opinion, it's the very best. I expect to see reams of copies from every manufacturer.

GF: I guess we'll just have to wait and see, right? (smiling)

DD: (laughs) Yeah, I guess we will...

Special thanks to my good friend Jay Moon and the folks at Acclaim for making this interview possible and enjoyable as well. -DH









































IGUANA ENTERTAINMENT











We recently had a chance to check out the coin-op version of *Batman Forever* at Iguana Entertainment's headquarters in Austin, Texas. After pigging out on Jay Moon's famous Texas chili, we traversed the sprawling offices of the Iguana HQ to spend some quality time with this long awaited coin-op game.

Although *Batman Forever* took about 9 months to develop in its current, *Final Fight*-like guise, the programming started around 18 months ago, when Iguana toyed around with different gameplay ideas. "We even experimented with a 3D, *Virtua Cop*-like design," said Nigel Cook, Iguana's Creative Director.

Interestingly, the developers said the Saturn version of *BF* would be "near arcade-perfect." *Near* arcade perfect? When pointing out the fact that the Titan arcade hardware is a Saturn, they decided to educate us a bit. You see, although *BF* does run on Saturn hardware, the size of the character files are so huge on the coin-op game (which is a ROM cartridge instead of a CD), the Saturn doesn't have enough internal RAM to display full-size *Batman Forever* characters and all their frames of animation. Acclaim and Iguana plan on developing a PC and PlayStation version of the game as well (in fact, we got to see the first level of the PS game).

After speaking to the developers and then playing the game, we came to the conclusion that *Batman Forever* is not only one of the deepest and most sophisticated *Final Fight* style game ever, it's the best *Batman* game I've ever played. Both Warner Bros. and DC Comics have been quoted as saying *BF* is the finest video game ever to carry the *Batman* license. After the SGI-rendered intro, the first thing you notice is how unbelievable the sound is. Designed by Acclaim coin-op, *BF* is the first game to use the RAX sound system.

The controls are simple enough. You have a jump button, a punch button (which doubles as a weapon launcher) and a kick button. If you hit punch and kick together, your character (Batman or Robin) will block. While in your block position, you can use the joystick to evade or even perform an offensive maneuver when you get surrounded. There are various objects (explosive barrels, tires, wooden crates, etc.) that you can pick up and throw at enemies.

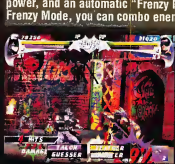
There are also various pads throughout the game that can give your character different power-ups and abilities. The Bat signal Pad deploys bat gadgets (Batarangs, tasers, Bat Bolas, Stun Bombs and more). There's also a Two-Face pad which has a rotating yin-yang symbol. The Two-Face pad can have a good or bad effect on the player depending on which side is stepped on. The last pad is the Riddler pad ("?" symbol). This mystery pad gives a random effect on the player who steps on it.

Unlike similar games, multi-hit combos are a big part of *Batman Forever*. Each character has over 20 ditterent combos. By performing various button commands, huge, *Killer Instinct*-type combos can be accessed. Enter all the combo commands before running out of power, and an automatic "Frenzy Mode" is engaged. When in Frenzy Mode, you can combo enemies in 2 directions, drastically increasing your combo hit total. The highest combo recorded so far in *BF* is 738 hits.

As you defeat enemies, they drop Power Up discs. As you collect these discs they power you up. Once powered up, the player does more damage to the enemies. To get from power 1 to power 2, the player must collect 5 discs. To get from power 2 to 3, 10 discs have to be collected. As well as doing more damage to the enemy, a powered up character can do longer combos (up to more than 700 hits!) plus, that character's weapon can act differently. For example, at power level 1, the Batarang travels in a straight line. At level 2, it becomes a glowing, homing Batarang. At level 3, the Batarang morphs into a bat and sticks to the enemy. This power-up rule applies to all of Batman and Robin's weapons.

Graphically, *Batman Forever* is stunning. Everything in the game has a high quality, *KI*, rendered look. The overall visual impact is very impressive.

Batman Forever is easily one of the most intense games of its type. We all felt that there was almost *too* much going on at once. Iguana is very aware ot this and is experimenting with reducing the number of on-screen enemies. Overall, *BF* is an amazing coin-op debut, a welcome return of a classic arcade genre and a great game to boot. With the endless array of one-on-one fighting games in the arcade, I hope *BF* will get the accolades it deserves.











PREVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - GREMLIN

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '96



E. STORM
GREMLIN HAS SOME MYSTERIOUS POWERS.









A huge fan of both the game (*Loaded*) and the Saturn, I couldn't be happier. The translation took a bit longer than I presumed but where the game is heading tells the tale.

Rather then merely porting over the game, minus the light sourcing, which made the PS game so great, Gremlin seemingly took on *Loaded* Saturn with all the vigor they did originally for the PlayStation. A rarity in this business. I'm sure they could have unloaded a reasonable facsimile months ago.

Instead, what we have here is a game every bit as good, and perhaps even a little better than the previous version. For starters, the light sourcing, for the most part, is here. It's not quite as gradient as the PS' but is present and effective nevertheless. I've seen pseudo-light sourcing on the Saturn before, an obvious effect. This game however, bears a striking resemblance to the real thing. The only noticeable shortfall graphically are the transparencies (or lack thereof) which appear dotty as certain shots clearly indicate. This detracts little from the game's splendor, if at all. *Loaded* is by the way, the current trend-setter in the top view action





category. Since the original, nothing has come close, in my humble opinion. The strategic, yet fiercely action-packed scenarios are filled with heart-stopping carnage, mass murder, much exploration and mind bending line scrolling.

Then of course there's the characters themselves, a motley crew of insane inmates gone mad. You just can't beat it.

Saturn owners can look forward to a tad faster gameplay than the PS' and clickety-crisp Saturn control. *Loaded* should be available by June and will likely be followed this year (hopefully) by *Re-Loaded*, Gremlin's stunning sequel. I'm writing this pre-E3. If *Re-Loaded* was at the show you should be able to catch a glimpse of it elsewhere in this issue.

GOLDEN AXE DUEL





SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - AM1

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY -ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - JUNE



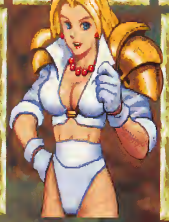
Not many people truly remember the original *Golden Axe*. It was the *Street Fighter* of its day, amazing gamers and attracting huge crowds of bystanders when it was first released. I've always loved the series, and was distraught that Sega seemed intent to let it die with that awful Mega Drive *Golden Axe III* (especially when the arcade *Golden Axe III* was so good!). Now it's back in fighting form, and though it is now far more the child of *Samurai Spirits* and *Street Fighter* than of the original series, it's great to have it back.

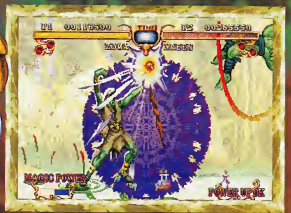
The characters are what make a fighting game, and *Golden Axe* has plenty to be proud of in that area. I'm surprised they didn't take more characters from the series (such as the ultra cool characters from *Revenge of Death Adder*), but the original characters are definitely cool. Doc, master of electricity, makes a much cooler hero than generic Ryu-clone Kain Battler; Zoma, one of the more innovative characters, has cool black magic; Jamm's a nice mix of Blanka and Cham Cham (seriously, exactly 1/2 of each); and dark ice elf Keel is by far the coolest character in the game—complete with a *Clockwork Orange* eye and two fast blades, Keel slices, dices and freezes with no shortage of panache. The last boss is a cool surprise, and

















very climactic.

The backgrounds are also pretty cool, full of animation and scaling in smoothly. Unfortunately, parallax is almost totally absent, appearing in only 4 of the 10 stages, and rarely that impressively. In stark contrast, Zoma's stage is the sole stunning parallax masterpiece, just sitting there saying "Well, I could have had awesome parallax backgrounds if I wanted to." Why!? Also mysterious is Jamm's total lack of a stage (unless you count the bear that just crawls up into someone else's stage and falls asleep). These are some of a handful of symptoms that suggest that *GA:TD* was rushed to market before it was totally ready.





Sega spent more time in the control department, though, and *The Duel* proves again why the Saturn pad is just the best pad ever made. Every move (all standard *Street Fighter* motions) can be delivered with near-perfect accuracy, except for the far trickier (but graphically astounding) death moves... Sega's inexperience at 2D fighting does shine through in spots, though, in that a lot of the moves seem totally useless against even marginally talented players. Take Milan Flare, for example. Her Vega-like air dives are so incredibly predictable that anyone who was playing the game awake could easily block them with 100% accuracy. In any sort of player vs. player game, that would make her totally useless, but the computer lets it through about 25% of the time.









Golden Axe: The Duel was a flawed but highly entertaining fighter when it first hit the Japanese Saturn six or seven months ago – (readers with good memories will notice that this is practically the exact same review I used for that version in Volume 3, Issue 12... sorry, I know it's cheap), and it still looks and feels great. But with the release of *Street Fighter Alpha*, *NightWarriors*, and the upcoming release of *King of Fighters '95* and (hopefully) *Samurai Shodown III*, *Golden Axe: The Duel* is now playing on a much more crowded field. Though it has plenty of charm, its lack of innovation and true competitive balance puts it a step behind any one of those titles.











REVIEW

LAYOUT - REUBUS



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CORE

PUBLISHER - US GOLD

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW



K. LEE
"Dat's da way to do it, man!"















SHELLSHOCK





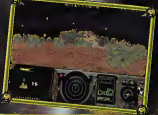












ShellShock is Core Design Ltd.'s first Saturn title. It offers a balance of intense military tank shooting, a unique urban theme, surprisingly addictive gameplay and a good deal of strategy. ShellShock's best feature however, is not its look or feel, but its ethnic attitude and presentation. In my opinion, Core took a big chance by imparting a modern urban African-American edge in ShellShock. It's encouraging to see a game targeted to this ever-growing, yet untapped market, though the amount of lingo and hip-hop tuneage may seem a bit stereotypical.

Graphically, ShellShock leaves much to be desired. The textures look muddy, the ground and terrain are pixelly, and even though there's never too much on screen at once, there's pop-up galore. 3D racers use turns to mask pop-up, but in ShellShock the areas are vast and for the most part, flat. . Still, I expected more visual punch from this game being from Core.

In the area of gameplay however, ShellShock really shines. Before each mission, you are briefed by an unknown military mastermind called "The Man," who







SHELLSHOCK DA WARDENZ













details your objective. The missions are based on real-life problems and situations (like cocaine smuggling in South America and civil war in Eastern Europe). A nice change of pace from the usual token war situations.

The gameplay in ShellShock is highly addictive. You have to use cunning and strategy as well as brute force to survive each mission. Completing ops earns you the needed cash to repair your busted tank and buy upgrades in the compound's shop. Not only does this feature force you to be careful during each mission (the less you're hit, the less money you have to spend on repairs) but to be supply-efficient during each acquisition as well.

To top it all off, ShellShock is overflowing with Rap, Rap and more Rap. It's one Bee-Bop shootin' tune after another. A bit much? Maybe, but hey, the kids seem to like it.

If your a closet tank pilot I recommend signing up for ShellShock.

K. LEE




















REVIEW

LAYOUT - REUBUS



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - KOKOPELI

PUBLISHER - TH•Q

FORMAT - CD

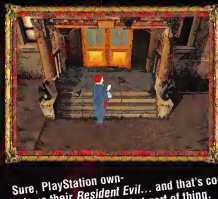
OF PLAYERS - 1

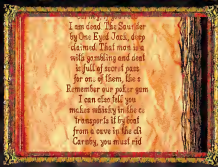
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JULY



TAKUHI
"Wow! A 386SX emulator, right here on my Saturn!"

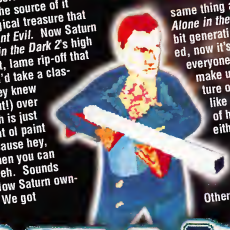


Sure, PlayStation owners have their *Resident Evil*... and that's cool if, you know, you're into that sort of thing. But now Saturn owners have the source of it all, the sequel to the rare magical treasure that was the inspiration for *Resident Evil*. Now Saturn owners can wave their *Alone in the Dark 2*'s high and gripe about what a blatant, lame rip-off that *Resident Evil* is. Personally, I'd take a classic gem (from an era when they knew what play control was all about!) over some overhyped remake which is just the same thing with a new coat of paint and lots of blood thrown in. 'Cause hey, who needs *Street Fighter II* when you can have... Karate Champ? Heh heh. Sounds good in print, but sorry, fellow Saturn owners. We got screwed.

Not that this is exactly the same thing as the early 90's PC game. Saturn *Alone in the Dark 2* has been upgraded for the 32-bit generation. No longer is everything flat-shaded, now it's all... texture-mapped! Yes, each and everyone one of the 30 or 40 polygons that make up each character has a shiny new texture on it. Now, instead of looking nothing like people, they look like sick mockeries of humanity itself. Everyone's face is either bone white or moss green, and they all look, walk, and animate as if they had just recently returned from the dead. And no, I assure you, that was not intentional.

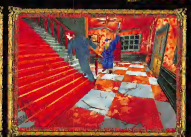
Other than that, this is the PC game. The computer version was designed for use

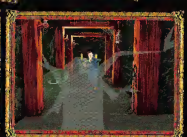


ONE EYED JACK'S REVENGE **ALONE IN THE DARK** ONE EYED JACK'S REVENGE









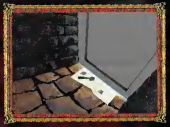






with cheap 2-button control pads, one button of which did an action, and the other of which took you to a screen that let you change which action the first button does. If you choose fight as your action, then you hold down the action button and press directions with the D-pad to do various moves. Back to head-butt, shoot, or stab. Forward to kick, or jab. It was one of the most annoying control schemes ever, having to switch to an option screen every time you wanted to attack, or stop attacking, but a practical necessity considering that was all people had. Now let's take a good look at the Saturn control pad... IT HAS EIGHT BUTTONS! Eventually you can get used to the control scheme, but it's things like having to switch to option screens literally a couple of times per minute that make it impossible to forget you're playing a piece of software and get into the adventure.

Of course, there are naturally many enhancements that come with the upgrade from disc to CD. For example, there's brutally excessive loading time. Yes, virtually every time you go into a new room, the game freezes for 5 or 10 seconds, just long enough for you to start wondering if the game had perhaps crashed or something. And if it still sounds a little too fast paced for you, you needn't worry...




Every time another character is on screen, the game slows down to 4 or 5 frames per second (you can actually count the frames off on your fingers). This way, you can enjoy the game's well thought out battles for even longer. Here's an example: An enemy shoots you... you SLOOWWWLLLYYY raise your gun to shoot him, and just before lame ol' Quimby has finally managed to aim it at his foe, he gets shot again! So Quimby has to start all over, SLOOOWWWLLLY pointing that gun, and then just before he can fire it... BAM! You're shot again! Etc., etc., etc., Game Over. The only way to win is to get the jump on your opponent, and if you fail to do that, it's way too easy to get stuck in a lock that completely kills you.

Though the *Alone in the Dark* series has always had a good story and some good puzzles (also a very large share of ridiculously stupid ones) the interface has always prevented people from ever being able to enjoy them. Now that its cheaply computer-generated, 256 color graphics have been rendered (no pun intended) horribly obsolete, it'll take more than some texture mapping to save *Alone in the Dark 2*.















We brought you the first PC screens of Core's *Tomb Raider* back in Issue 3, Volume 7. Now, we are pleased (well, overjoyed actually) to bring you the first live Saturn and PlayStation grabs.

I got excited about TR back in Jan...ot '94, when Core Pres:, Jeremy Smith revealed to me their vision of an *Indiana Jones* type setting, with 3D *Prince of Persia* adventure gameplay and a sexy, generously equipped (if you know what I mean) female lead.



PREVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM





SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CORE

PUBLISHER - US GOLD

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '96





Lara, Lara, Lara!

This was back before the Saturn and PS were available, so the mere utterance of such a game evoked extreme anticipation. To say the least, my expectations were high, considering *Tomb Raider* has been in development ever since.

After playing our preview disc for just a few minutes I knew Core was well on their way to meeting, and probably exceeding my expectations.

Tomb Raider is one of most ambitious polygon based action games you'll ever play. Among the vast polygonal areas, Lara runs free with fluid animation, a sight for sore eyes. She can perform a vast number of acrobatic tasks and has at her disposal a full quiver of treasure hunter's tools. Besides the standard flashlight, first aid kits, guns, etc., Lara also carries with her a Walkman (most likely allowing you to tog-







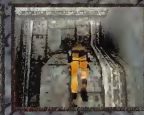
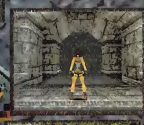






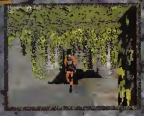
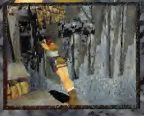
gle musical selections in the final game) and a portable game system. So she's a gamer... cool!

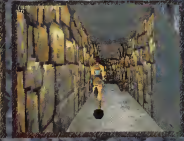
The play mechanics are brilliant. The D-pad alone produces a swift run, holding X and L-shift allows surveillance above, below, and on each side (allowing Lara to look before she leaps), B produces a horizontal jumping grab, POP style, and A, a beautifully animated forward leap. R-shift stops you dead in your tracks, L-shift lets you edge slowly forwards. R-shift plus a directional is used for strafing and C readies your 2 pistolas or item of choice. Most impressive of all, however, is Core's godly 3D engine which allows ultra-fluid gameplay with constantly shifting cameras. *Tomb*



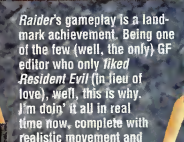


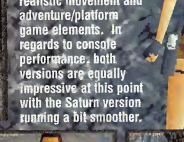
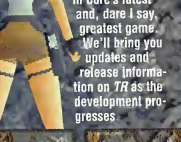





Raider's gameplay is a landmark achievement. Being one of the few (well, the only) GF editor who only *liked Resident Evil* (in lieu of love), well, this is why. I'm doin' it all in real time now, complete with realistic movement and adventure/platform game elements. In regards to console performance, both versions are equally impressive at this point with the Saturn version running a bit smoother.


But they are both early. I'm sure the end result will be two great games, one with more generous light sourcing and one with more fluid control. Either way, everyone will want to partake in Core's latest and, dare I say, greatest game. We'll bring you updates and release information on *TR* as the development progresses.




3DO VISITS GAMEFAN

(and we ask about a million questions)

The development of the M2 is an ambitious hardware project. Unlike the PlayStation, Saturn and Nintendo 64, the M2 (like the 3DO Multiplayer before it) is being designed for several different entertainment media and consumer electronic applications. Matsushita (the new owners of the M2 chipset) envision M2 technology being used in personal computers, in-car satellite navigational systems, TV set-top boxes, internet link devices, DVD players and more—ambitious plans indeed.

Somewhere in that mix lies a video game application, and (naturally) this is where we come in. So, speaking in the context of games, what's so special about the M2?

We recently spoke to Tuesday Uhland, Corporate Communications Associate, and Joseph Ybarra, Vice President and Executive Producer of the 3DO Company, who shined some light on the uses of the M2 technology. Beyond the well-publicized 3D capabilities of the 64-bit machine, Miss Uhland and Mr. Ybarra were quite keen to stress a few other unique attributes. Although the two representatives from 3DO said that M2 can render 3D textured polygons with lots of nifty effects added (mip-mapping, filtering, specular lighting, etc.), Mr. Ybarra also stated that although the Nintendo 64 can technically produce the same hardware effects, the overall quality of the effects won't be as good due to the memory constraints of the cartridge format. For example, On the M2 they'll be able to display 2D bit-mapped games in 24-bit color (16.9 million colors on screen) at a screen resolution of 640 x 480 (SVGA resolution). "The thing is, nobody has ever seen a game like that before, and you won't see it on any other system." Even though the N64 can also display 24-bit color bit-maps at SVGA resolution, "those images take up a lot of memory and after a while, you would run out of space on a cart."

Another hardware trick of the M2 is the ability to display VHS quality, full motion video which can be wrapped around real-time polygons. "You run into the same memory limitations of the cart format when trying to display extensive, high quality animated textures on the N64...The space just isn't there." Mr. Ybarra would neither confirm nor deny the rumors of the M2 having a quad-speed CD drive and 8 megabytes of SDRAM, stating only "The minimum hardware requirements of the M2 are 4 megabytes of RAM and a 2-speed CD drive." One has to feel that if Matsushita decided to increase the specs of the M2, 3DO wouldn't stop them.

Miss Uhland and Mr. Ybarra also talked about the recent restructuring of the 3DO business model (see diagram below) since Matsushita bought the rights to the M2.

Let's start out by looking at the 3DO Systems half consisting of: the video game division, PC division, digital video division and the arcade/development systems division.

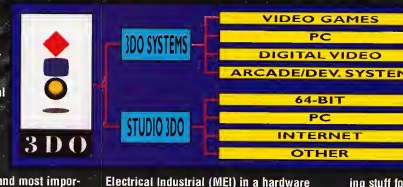
The video game arm of 3DO systems is handling the technical information and development communication to Matsushita Electrical Industrial (MEI) in a hardware capacity. The PC arm is responsible for the joint deal with Cirrus Logic for an upcoming 3D M2 accelerator. The DV arm handles all the MPEG upgrades for the 3DO (MPEG Xpress 1000 and 2000). The Arcade/Dev. Sys. arm creates all the game creation tools for the M2 (both home and arcade) and will lead/assist in coin-op M2 applications (of which Konami would be the most obvious benefactor).

The Studio 3DO half is split up by: the 64-bit division, PC division, the internet division, and one unknown top secret division. The 64-bit arm is developing all of 3DO's games for the M2, period. It doesn't matter if it's for the console M2, the arcade M2 unit or the PC M2 add-on. If it has an M2 inside it, they're making games for it. The PC arm makes all of Studio 3DO's games that are not M2 related (*Starfighter 2000*, the *Game Guru*, etc.). The internet arm produces games for internet play (network games) as long as they're not M2 based. We suspect the "other" arm is a top secret skunkworks, developing stuff for the MX (M2's successor).

What does all this mean? It means that only 3DO and Sega plan on developing hardware and software in every video game market. Only in 3DO's case, the slate has been wiped clean and the future is theirs for the taking. You may laugh now, but 3DO is doing everything possible to make sure that the last laugh is their own. -K. Lee

3DO has been split into 2 sub-companies: 3DO Systems (hardware) and Studio 3DO (software). Both sub-companies are further divided into 4 corporate sub-systems. The reasons for this radical change in company structure (besides the 100 million bucks from Matsushita) are multi-fold.

First, by segregating the company into highly focused teams, 3DO can concentrate on highly specific things more efficiently. Second, although each team unit is very specialized, collectively, 3DO could become one of the most diverse and influential video game companies on the planet. Third, by widening their focus, 3DO now has one of the largest video game research and development teams in the world, overnight. Fourth, and most important, since 3DO is wetting their feet in every possible video game market (PC hardware/software, console hardware/software, internet hardware/software, arcade hardware/software, DVD technology, MPEG technology and more), they can quickly adapt to the market in whichever direction it chooses to move.



GEN-32

JAPAN SOFT



ONE OF THE LAST HAND DRAWN GAMES IS, SADLY, ONE OF THE BEST. READ ALL ABOUT IT...

Kyo Gokuh















As someone who's been playing games on a daily basis since the glorious NES days, I have developed a love for the traditional platformer that to this day, has not begun to fade. I also prefer my characters hand drawn and conventionally animated. Motion capture, while realistic (neatot), can be an un-exaggerated cold feeling technique. I don't necessarily want real human movement in my games. I want exaggeration and personality, something you can still only get in traditionally drawn and animated games. Sadly, these are a dying breed, so when one comes around I squeeze out every drop of gameplay. Because *Keio Yugekitai* is (one) pretty cute, and (two) traditional, it will not make JVC's US lineup (we'll get *Deadly Skies* instead). How deprived we are...











R REVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - VICTOR

PUBLISHER - JVC

FORMAT - CD

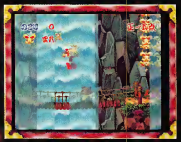
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



SOMEBODY CALL THE POLYGON POLICE!!

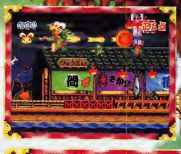





Those familiar with the import game scene or short lived Sega-CD may know the *Keio* series from the shooter *Keio Flying Squadron*, which did make it to the US market, but failed miserably, a direct result of the system it was made for, the infamous SegaCD.

This time out the designers have taken a more mainstream approach and created a downright masterful action platform game with a couple of high powered shooting levels thrown in for added diversity and storyline purposes.

After the high quality anime prologue (I won't spoil it for you, but the story is pretty cool) you are greeted by blindingly colorful graphics, generous parallax, and lots of super cool animation. Rami is drawn and animated brilliantly, with perhaps the coolest facial expressions I've ever seen. When she gets hit, lifts a heavy object, or is nabbed by an enemy, classic Japanese anime expressions steal the scene. A close look at some of the shots should now be taken. See? pretty neat huh? The action in *Keio* is both solid action platform and tradi-

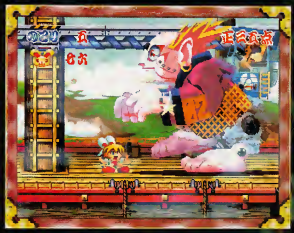








tional 8-bit pattern memorization. It's sorta like *MegaMan* with better control and level design. There's much to do in every level and no two are alike. You'll ride a train and roller coaster, play vertically using an umbrella, swim, throw switches to activate barriers, climb ladders, and use a bow and arrow, hammer or umbrella, in every level. The control is perfect and the music... splendid. A music CD will likely follow.





The bosses in *Keio* are some of the most creative, well-drawn and fun to watch as you'll ever see. From the huge wrestler who first grows to mammoth proportions and then spins himself dizzy until he yaks feverishly (complete with convincing sound effects) allowing you a window to whack him, to the huge mechanical freak (check left) who morphs three times, driven on a forklift by a little raccoon, to a UFO which sprouts a mechanical pigeon who, when hit, loses all feathers and cowers to near Kentucky Fried proportions, it's all here for

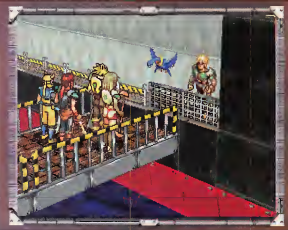


you to savor until the next pre-rendered sprite invades your game system. Not that there aren't a lot of great pre-rendered games out and about, it's just that there are so few games like this one.

After all my ranting, few will play *Keio Yugekitai*, as only the craziest gamers (like myself and much of our staff) search out and buy import games. But those of you who do will not only possess a



game worth many, many plays (on hard, *Keio* is just that), but one of a dying breed. It's a shame the Sega CD game took such a nose dive, otherwise this game would no doubt be headed our way. But hey, that's why they make converters. Our next shot at a like title will no doubt come from Treasure as they prepare... sorry, I can't say just yet. But trust me, it's the one you've been waiting for. Until then the balcony is closed.







Your team of bounty hunters has just captured Bilan, an evil beast that's been terrorizing the mainland for months. Bounty Hunter Ryu-ya has volunteered to escort the beast to its exile on the maximum security prison at "Jailer's Island." He bids his teammates goodbye and boards the ship.

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CLIMAX

PUBLISHER - SEGA/JPN & US

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE-SMR-JPN, TBA US

DARK SAVIOR

ダークセイバー

Two months ago, we first previewed *Dark Savior*, the true 3-D follow-up to Climax's isometric classic, *LandStalker*. Though the Japanese release date has been pushed back a few months, Climax has been working feverishly on *Dark Savior*, and our newest version shows off their efforts; you can now exit the boat and explore the most amazing 3-D world ever created for an adventure game.

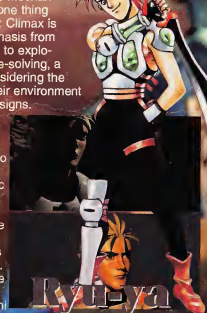
It's pretty hard to believe that a 32-bit game being made by a company as tiny as Climax is able to so easily accomplish goals that most 64-bit developers have trouble with. *Dark Savior* has no pop-up (literally NONE), and accomplishes this without the crutches of cheap mist effects or an unrealistically curved overworld. And although there are a few times when your screen will be plotted out by big ugly pixels, the majority of the textures look perfect, even when they're right in your face. The only problem with the visuals is the hand-drawn characters, who could use a few more frames of animation, especially when they turn around. Other than the astonishing graphics, it's too soon to pass judgment on the rest of the game. The only battles that are playable are the one-on-one boss encounters, which could use some work. The few regular enemies that have been programmed in just sit there and stare, so I have no idea how the regular battle mechanics will be. But one thing seems apparent: Climax is shifting the emphasis from battling enemies to exploration and puzzle-solving, a good choice considering the excellence of their environment and dungeon designs.

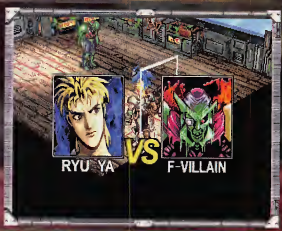
With such promising elements as the "Parallel Scenario System," and a uniquely futuristic fantasy world, *Dark Savior*'s quest sounds like it'll be as engrossing as its 3-D environment. I can't wait to see how this one turns out! -Takuhi



TAKUHI
3D that looks good, AND improves the play mechanics... About time!



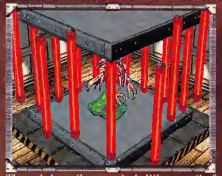




By the time we found the key to the captain's quarters, it was too late. The Captain had been killed and while we fought one of Bilan's minions, Bilan slipped overboard. The last time you see him, he's swimming towards Jailer's Island. You have no choice but to follow...











Though heavily guarded, Bilan easily frees himself from his cell and proceeds to slaughter everyone else on board. Ryu-ya must get to the captain's room to stop Bilan, or send out an SOS if necessary. It's a bit more dangerous, but a shortcut outside of the boat will save you valuable time.

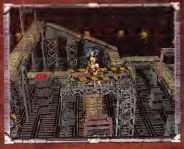








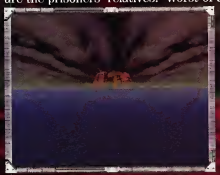








Jailer's Island is a town plus a maximum security prison... Today is the birthday of its narcissistic ruler, Kurtliegen, and the one day each year when visitors are allowed. So not only are the town's residents' lives at stakes, but so are the prisoners' relatives. Worst of all, Bilan's nowhere to be seen...









Forget status screens... Ryu-ya's skylin' with his Bounty Hunter-issue daily planner, complete with actual working calculator.

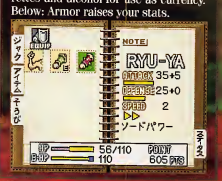




Your talking bird, Jack, has his own section in the daily planner. Here you can trade your bounty points for level-ups, HP refills, or hints.



Since Jailer's Island has only a barter economy, you'll have to collect cigarettes and alcohol for use as currency. Below: Armor raises your stats.





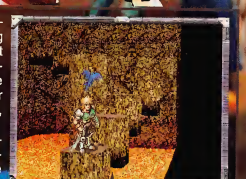




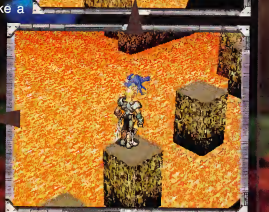


As much as I loved *LandStalker*, I really, really hated it. The main reason being that in *LandStalker's* isometric world, it was impossible to tell the depth of suspended platforms. For example, is the platform you have to jump to in the lower right picture level with you and to the left, or straight ahead and below you?

Fortunately, *Dark Savior* lets you control the perspective with the L and R buttons, so you can find out exactly where that platform is without having to take a blind jump.





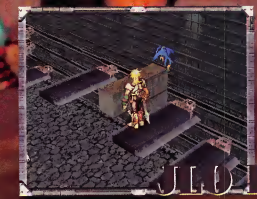




Sewers



Subway Mtn.



J.L.O. Base





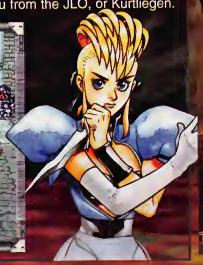






So, what exactly is the plot of *Dark Savior*? To some extent, that's up to you. Featuring Climax's "Parallel Scenario System," there are approximately 4 plots running simultaneously. In one, you're pursuing Bilan, in another, you're doing something with the JLO, a terrorist organization that is opposed to the current leadership of Jailer's Island. The third involves the mysterious Koyuki, pictured below, a female ninja who's somehow involved in the main storyline. These aren't just subplots, any one of them could become the main plot depending on your actions. For example, if you kill Bilan early on, the last boss would be someone else, like Adu from the JLO, or Kurtliegen.















A 16 BIT GAME ON A 32 BIT SYSTEM... WHY?



REVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



A GREAT SNES GAME-YES. BUT ON THE SATURN, PS, AND 3DO... NO!





Capcom's *RockMan X3*, the latest *MegaMan* incarnation on the Super Nintendo, has been ported over (big SNES emulator) to the Saturn and PlayStation. Sound strange? My thoughts exactly. You just have to ask yourself, "Why wouldn't Capcom create a brand-new *Rock/MegaMan* for the 32-bit systems?" The answer to that is: They are. *RockMan X4* and *RockMan 8* are both due later this year. In the meantime, Capcom has decided to release the latest SNES *RockMan* with some cool animated toons on the next-generation platforms.

RMX3 is a solid 2D platformer, the lone Saturn upgrade being the cartoons. After finishing each level, you'll be greeted by a lovely, 30 second cinema which highlights the boss of the level you're about to enter. It's a new version of the patented "boss preview" seen in every *MegaMan* game.

Now for the lone Saturn downgrade... it's letterboxed. Take a look at the vs. shots overhead. Notice anything strange? The PS was also graced with this wondrous SNES game, and full screen at that. Oh, joy of joys! I guess this makes the PS version the winner, or at least, less of a loser. The sound at least *has* been upgraded. Redbook audio is supplied but the melodies weren't all that memorable to begin with, so this hardly makes the game worth re-playing.

The only worthy aspect of *RMX3* on the Saturn is the control, which is of course per-





fect. Of course it's limited, but accurate nonetheless. *MegaMan* still can't duck, and enemies re-appear at a scary rate. Non-stop dodging, jumping, shooting, climbing, dashing, and pattern-memorizing ala old NES is what you'll find here, which ain't all that bad if you're starving for a traditional day of super hard gameplay. But if you want it that bad I'm sure you did it on the SNES. So what's the point? To play a landmark Nintendo game on two rival systems perhaps. Personally, I'll wait for *MM8*, which looks stunning. The next time I see *MegaMan* on my Saturn he'd better be all dressed up for the next generation.



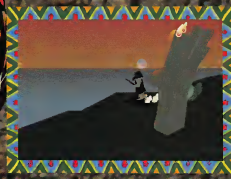
TAIL OF THE SUN

REVIEW-ARTDINK-PLAYSTATION
1 PLYR-AVAIL NOW JAPAN

IT'S JUST LIKE THE TITLE SAYS...

Wild, pure, simple life. No instructions, no rules. This original concept made possible by the features housed within the PS may not look like much, but once you begin to play, you'll think of little else than your new-found tribe of crazy cave men and women. After all, they are all your ancestors, spawned according to your experience as a prehistoric human being without a clue in his head. I mean this quite literally. You start out in *TOTS* with three characters: one man, and two women. At the outset, each of their brains is barely developed and their bodies are weak. It's your job to hunt for food and stay alive, kill for food and return it to the village. As you do these simple tasks, your brain and body will slowly develop, provided you eat the proper foods for each. Staying close to home, steering clear from the frozen tundras and fierce beasts, killing only birds, gets you started. After finding the sacred stones you can join different tribes. Each excels at a simple task (hunters, swimmers, etc.). By doing so you can venture further as your village develops. Ultimately, you will culturally

















BRING HOME THE BACON AND THE TRIBE GOES WILD! LET'S EAT!!











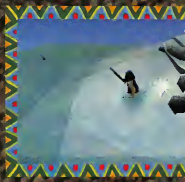
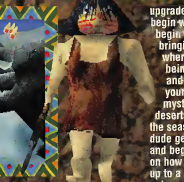
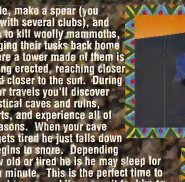


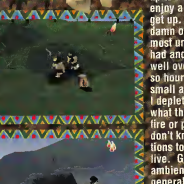
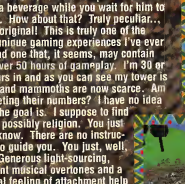





















upgrade, make a spear (you begin with several clubs), and begin to kill woolly mammoths, bringing their tusks back home where a tower made of them is being erected, reaching closer and closer to the sun. During your travels you'll discover mystical caves and ruins, deserts, and experience all of the seasons. When your cave dude gets tired he just falls down and begins to snore. Depending on how old or tired he is he may sleep for up to a minute. This is the perfect time to enjoy a beverage while you wait for him to get up. How about that? Truly peculiar... damn original! This is truly one of the most unique gaming experiences I've ever had and one that, it seems, may contain well over 50 hours of gameplay. I'm 30 or so hours in and as you can see my tower is small and mammoths are now scarce. Am I depleting their numbers? I have no idea what the goal is. I suppose to find fire or possibly religion. You just don't know. There are no instructions to guide you. You just, well, live. Generous light-sourcing, ambient musical overtones and a general feeling of attachment help make *Tail* a completely enthralling adventure. It's the first one that you truly mold according to the decisions you make in your wild, pure, simple life.

REVIEW

GALAXIAN³

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO

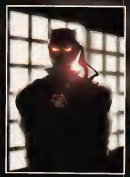
PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW - JAPAN



TAKUHI
SIX EXCITING MINUTES!

Ah, I remember the first time I played a Theatre 6 game... Big screen, cool computer graphics, but no play mechanics and you're forced to share one life bar with all the other participants. Even worse, it cost THREE bucks. That's ridiculous. So I was looking forward to the home version of *Galaxian³*, so I could fully explore the depths of this amazing looking game.

My first discovery was that *Galaxian³* doesn't look so amazing, 5 years later. In fact, it's kind of a joke... *Project Dragoon's* flat-shaded polygons just don't cut it any more, and for some reason Namco decided to preserve the flickery line in the middle of the screen. But hey, it's worth playing once... that should take you about 10 minutes.

The new PlayStation-original game, *Rising of Gourd, is* amazing. The CG is everything you'd expect from Namco, and is a visual treat for all 6 minutes it lasts. So, basically, you can play through this *Galaxian³* compilation disk in 20 minutes, and enjoy nearly half of it. Of course, Namco's put in a couple of extra options to extend the life of *G³*, and the point









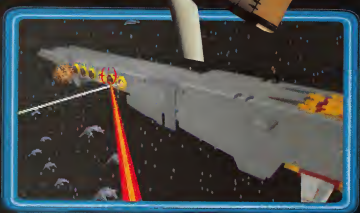














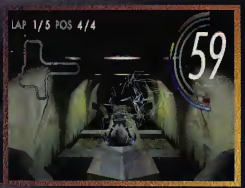
is no longer to beat the games, but to outscore your computer-controlled co-pilots. You can also change some of the parameters of your weapon, and use a mouse or *NeGcon* (but not the Konami gun) to play.

And that's really about it. I strongly suspect that the original *G*^{3} sequel, *Attack of the Zolgear,* is in there too, since the game has a mysterious 1992 copyright in addition to the 1990 and 1995 dates. But if you have to beat all the hyper-skilled co-pilots to get it, it really wouldn't be worth it for just another 10 minutes of dated FMV. It's always nice to see a good arcade translation, but half an hour of good graphics and no play mechanics just don't cut it for me. -Takuhi



E3 UPDATE !

DNN
DIEHARD NEWS NETWORK



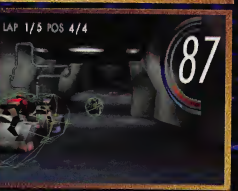








Sucking the juice out of LA's power supply, this 4 year-old, multi-national software company (with offices in England, Denmark, Sweden and Los Angles, California) has gained a great deal of respect among the development community for their innovative graphic algorithms, game design techniques and cutting edge 3D engine technology. Scavenger's goal is to develop and market state-of-the-art technologies for better gameplay, graphics, music and sound effects. To this end, they have had much success and accolades. *Subterrania*, Scavenger's first game for the Sega Genesis won the "Blaster of the Year" award and *Red Zone* for the Genesis won the Sega Third Party Award for "Best Flying/Driving game." They didn't stop there. They've since developed *Amok* and *Scorcher* for the Saturn and PS consoles. Debuting at the 1995 E3 Expo in Los Angles, these two games acquired much industry and public attention for their display of clean, ultra-fast 3D and cutting edge special effects. Incorporating Scavenger's proprietary BSpace technology, *Amok* features smooth scaling, subtle lighting effects and detailed three-dimensional environments. *Scorcher*, a futuristic racing game, boasts advanced 3D graphics, high-tech lighting algorithms (real-time ray-traced simulated shadows) and detailed depth clipping. Running at a smooth 30 frames per second and displaying 32,000 colors on screen, *Scorcher* has real 3D collision detects within a real 3D environment. Sega was so impressed with the 3D in *Scorcher*, they presented a demo of the game (along with early *VF2* and *Sega Rally* demos) to third party developers, in an effort to convince them of the 3D powers of the Saturn. Scavenger introduced their PC title *Into the Shadows* at the 1995 E3 show, a 3D D&D style fighting game. Using motion captured characters and real-time lighting algorithms, *Into the Shadows* was one of the most sophisticated PC games at the show, arguably surpassing even ID's long awaited *Quake*.

























Scavenger assaulted the E3 with a monolithic display. Their flagship 3D graphic technology for the Saturn and PlayStation was a huge success. Entitled "NURB volume rendering" this revolutionary new technique uses hand-drawn 3D sprites to display characters with more detail than ever.

Amok, Scavenger's next release (featured in the Feb. '96 GF) should be in a box by now.













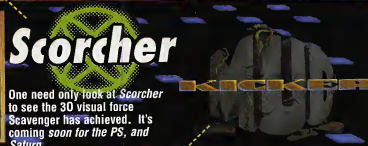












One need only look at *Scorcher* to see the 3D visual force Scavenger has achieved. It's coming *soon for the PS, and Saturn.*

Mud Kicker is Scavenger's new 3D off-road racing game for the Saturn, PS and PC. With graphics like this, *"MK"* may take on a whole new meaning! It looks like a friggin' painting!

How do they do it!?







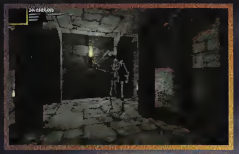




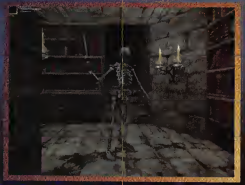










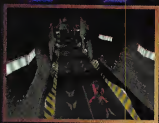




INTO THE SHADOWS is Scavenger's blazing new medieval fighter. Due out for the Saturn, PlayStation and PCs, *Into the Shadows* is sure to cause a big stir in the gaming community. Featuring Scavenger's Triton Advanced Physics Engine (with over two years of development time) and motion captured characters, this game is destined to be another graphic wonder. This D&D style dungeon fighter is filled with bursting effects, insane fly-bys and furious old world encounters. Due out soon for the PC and later this year for the Saturn and PlayStation, *Into the Shadows* will satisfy even the most cryptic appetite.



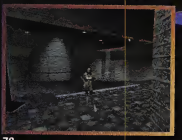




Wow, NERB technology looks like the first viable alternative to all those polygon based character games. You really have to see this game to believe it. *Terminus* looks and feels totally new and, as great as all Scavenger's games are, this one struck me as the best. This is a story worth telling in detail and a game that needs a page (or two, or three) of its own.

Next month we'll take a closer look at *Terminus* and bring you a full report.




GAMEFAN SPORTS



Chip



Cal Cavalier

CAL'S CORNER

Its been an exciting year of racing so far in Formula One. The new Renault powered Williams FW-18s of Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve have been burning up the world circuits on a consistent basis. In the F1 opener in Australia, rookie F1 sensation Villeneuve qualified on the pole and would've won the race (the last rookie in F1 to accomplish that feat was Mario Andretti) too if he hadn't sprung an oil leak near the end of the race. Nevertheless, the young French-Canadian still finished second in Melbourne, giving both fans and critics around the world good reason to be impressed with Villeneuve's performance.

What everybody was really impressed with is the continued superlative performance of Frank Williams' two V-10 powered blue and white streaks. Out of 6 races so far (Australian GP, Brazilian GP, Argentine GP, European GP, San Marino GP and the Monaco GP), a Williams FW-18 has placed first in all 6 (Villeneuve conquered the "ring" at the European GP, while Damon Hill has won the other five). It's enough to make the other teams owners want to rip their hair out. Case in point.

Given that the FW-18 is not an absolutely new car, but rather a development of last year's FW-17, it was perhaps no surprise that is should have proved reliable, as well as fast, but few had anticipated the degree of its superiority over its rivals. In the final pre-season test at Estoril, Mika Hakkinen's McLaren-Mercedes set the fastest time, with Villeneuve next up, yet in Melbourne the McLaren was emphatically not a front runner.

Just as it is hardly unprecedented for certain teams—usually the poorer ones—to run their cars underweight during winter testing (in the hope of attracting sponsorship with apparently sensational times), so there were suspicions that Jacques and Damon were sandbagging at Estoril, unwilling to reveal the full potential of the FW-18. Their performances in Australia added weight to the theory.

The general consensus now is that unless major improvements happen to the other top teams (Bennetton, McLaren, Tyrrell and "Ol' Moneybags," Ferrari) a 17-for-17 Williams sweep is not out of the question. And that kind of domination is boring. Whatever happens, we are witnessing history in the making with the renaissance of Williams, the hard charging grit of Englishman Damon Hill and the raw talent of the fresh newcomer Jacques Villeneuve.

GameFan Sports Previews

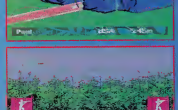
Olympic Summer Games

If you have a SNES and you're looking for a new Olympic sports game, here's one choice worth considering... T•HQ's *Olympic Summer Games*.

Due out this summer for the SNES (Game Boy and Genesis versions are expected to be available around the same time), *Olympic Summer Games* is expected to be the only non-32-bit game to center around the Summer Olympics in Atlanta. Experience 10 challenging Olympic events: 100m sprint, 110m hurdles, pole vault, triple jump, javelin, skeet shooting and the archery competition. Do your best and go for the gold!







MLB Pennant Race

Here's a sneak peek at Sony's much anticipated baseball game, *MLB Pennant Race* (no references to Steve, please). With the huge success of Sony's other sports titles, *MLB* could easily become the PlayStation baseball game to beat. With both the MLB and MLBPA licenses, *Pennant Race* includes all 28 Major League Baseball teams, all the stadiums and more than 700 players. All the players have been motion captured for full-on realism down to spit-tin' the chew-goo. All the stadiums are texture mapped polygons and the game runs at 30 frames per second, so expect much fluidity in this game. Due out in May, *MLB Pennant Race* is Sony's bid for the baseball crown. It's good to be the King!












OLYMPIC SOCCER

GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - US GOLD

PUBLISHER - US GOLD

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1 -4

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - JUNE



CAL CAVALIER

US Gold is making an aggressive move into the cutthroat soccer game market. *Olympic Soccer* combines great-looking 3D polygon graphics, easy-to-play, yet difficult to master gameplay, charismatic play-by-play announcing, and an impressive amount of depth.

US Gold bills *Olympic Soccer* as the first TRUE 3D soccer game and indeed the graphics are impressive. The play environment itself (stadium, crowd, turf) are made up of textured polygons and they look crisp and detailed when compared to other PS soccer games like *Goal Storm* or *FIFA*. Like *Goal Storm*, the players in *Olympic Soccer* are made up of simple flat-shaded polygons. However, the animation of each player is the smoothest and most realistic I've seen on the PlayStation so far.

Compared to the other games in this genre, the sound only finishes mid-pack. Although the reaction time of the play-by-play announcing is incredibly quick and the British announcer can be very amusing at times ("Where's my tea?"), the sounds of the crowd are less inspiring. Don't get me wrong, they do get excited when the home team scores a goal or a player performs an aggressive move, but you don't get the foaming-at-the-mouth ambience of say... the Brazilian crowd, with their chanting, drum-beating and overall rowdy attitude. Other soccer games have featured this "crowd excitement" and *OS* should be no exception.

What I liked most of all about *Olympic Soccer* was the gameplay. US Gold added a lot of complexity and small details to the gameplay (*OS* has multiple special moves and even "combos:" bicycle kicks, diving headers, multiple fakes, give-and-gos, banana kicks and more). What's so appealing about *OS*, however, is how a complete novice can come in, play and have a great time. On the flip side, a soccer enthusiast can feel right at home with this game as well.

At first glance, *Olympic Soccer* appears to be yet another flashy PS sports title... all show and no go. Sit down, invest some time, and you'll find *OS* to be one of the deepest, addicting, playable, and yes... most fun soccer games on the PlayStation. -Cal







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Acclaim's long-awaited 32-bit baseball game, *Frank Thomas: Big Hurt Baseball*, has finally arrived. At one time, the PlayStation was infamous for its lack of great baseball games. All that, as you will see, is changing. In a period of just two months, *Triple Play '97*, *MLB Pennant Race* and now this game have turned the PlayStation into the first choice in 32-bit baseballin' consoles.

As is expected from a modern baseball game, *Frank Thomas: Big Hurt* includes the MLBPA license so all of the big-league players are represented in the game. Unfortunately, only the players association license is featured, so you're stuck with choosing teams like Colorado and Los Angeles rather than the Rockies and the Dodgers. No big deal. Beyond playing exhibition, regular season and playoff games, you can dabble with batting practice or the home run derby to come to grips with hitting the ball. (If it was all that easy, pro-players wouldn't be offered millions of dollars to safely hit the ball three out of ten times...right?) Other than the lack of the MLB license, *Big Hurt* has all the options and features hard-core players demand in their baseball games.

What I like the most about this game are the killer graphics and the fantastic gameplay. The instant I started playing the game, I was amazed by the smooth 3D, detailed artwork and graphic design. Before each game, the camera starts with a high angled, rotating overview of the stadium (complete with polygon buildings in the background and an awesome lens flare effect on sunny afternoons). During the game, the camera follows the ball as it hits off the bat or is thrown from the outfield. In *Big Hurt*, confusing camera angles and a lack of depth perception are not factors. Each player has been motion-captured to perfection in Acclaim's advanced studios. Overall, *Big Hurt* has a functional, classy, yet no-frills look that works quite well.

It's this "functional" look that sets the tone for the instinctive gameplay. Not since *Major League Baseball* for the Saturn (which, by the way, I feel shares *Big Hurt*'s classy look and feel) has a 32-bit baseball game been this effortless to play. Fielding, batting, pitching, the bullpen, you name it, everything is set up and executed as logically as you could hope it would be. Amazing!

If you're looking for a baseball game with all the flash and frills of the major league itself, *Frank Thomas: Big Hurt Baseball* is definitely not for you (perhaps EA's *Triple Play '97* is more your speed). However, if you want to cut to the chase (and like PLAYING more than viewing a big budget production), your game has arrived. -Cal





GAMEFAN

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - IGUANA
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - JUNE



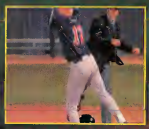
CAL CAVALIER
NO-FRILLS BASEBALL





TRIPLE PLAY VIRTUAL STADIUM™ BASEBALL 97

GAMEFAN SPORTS

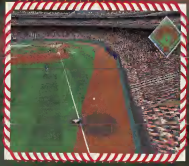








PREVIEW







PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA CANADA

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JUNE



CAL CAVALIER
HARD-HITTING BASEBALL ACTION IS ON THE WAY

In my opinion, no PlayStation baseball game has ever captured the overall brilliance of Sega's *World Series Baseball*. *WSB* offers great gameplay, plenty of options, extensive stats, cool play-by-play announcing AND great graphics. Up until this point, PS baseball sims have had the gameplay and the accuracy, but were missing one important feature: visuals to match Sega's. This is particularly surprising for a system worshiped for its polygon abilities. However, with EA Sports' new *Triple Play '97*, WSB may have met its match.



As many of you know, I'm not the biggest fan of EA Sports' "Virtual Stadium" game engine (a technique that combines pre-rendered characters and places them in real-time polygon environments). However, *Triple Play '97* uses an updated version of the VS engine and the results are impressive, to say the least. Not only is the 3D faster than in previous versions of the Virtual Stadium engine (used in *FIFA '96*, *NBA Live '96* and the much-plagued *Madden '96*), but it's smoother and







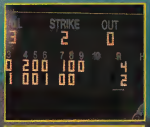




















much more impressive than any other PS baseball game to date. Even better, the SGI-rendered characters are more refined and have much more detail and character than almost any other sim out there. Little details like the subtle shadows and highlights that appear on each player at night add to the realism. Although the player animation is still motion-captured, there seem to be more frames in this game than in EA's other sports titles.

It is obvious to me that *Triple Play '97* is the fruit of great labor, pain and love from the designers at EA Canada. There's such a volume of small details and refinements in this game that it's amazing. *Triple Play '97* is the first baseball game on any of the 32-bit home consoles to feature all the teams and stadiums in the majors, via an official MLB license. With an MLBPA license as well, TP also sports over 700 major league players—more than any other game.

Before you play each game, you are greeted with an amazing, rendered pre game fly-by of each stadium. The game's so detailed that you even hear the last few lyrics of the national anthem before the FMV sequence zooms up to the scoreboard—and they're all by different singers! Also, don't expect to hear our national anthem in Toronto; you actually get "Oh, Canada." Enter the option screen and the stunning attention to detail continues. Each option menu has beautiful hand-drawn background art that is just that: art. Additionally, you can select from three different styles of music while you're dabbling in the option mode. Amazing!





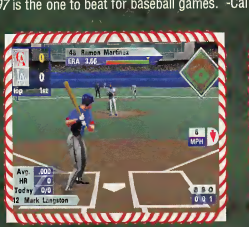


Triple Play '97 also features eight-player capability, simultaneous pitcher/batter perspectives with the PS link-up mode, three batting views, four fielding views, real physics (ball spin, wind drift, and real player attributes), three skill levels, five game modes (in the full season mode, you can choose between 26, 52, 104 or 162 games), home run derby, play-by-play commentary... the list goes on and on.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this game is that it's still only 80% complete, so stuff like player animation and game AI can only improve. Even in this pre-alpha guise, *TP '97* destroys all 32-bit baseball games to date. The only possible upset could be in the form of Sony's new baseball game, *MLB Pennant Race.* Sony has quickly established themselves as the leader in console sports games and *MLB* is said to be their best effort yet... We'll just have to wait and see. As of now, *Triple Play '97* is the one to beat for baseball games. -Cal



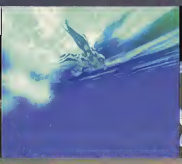














GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1 - 4

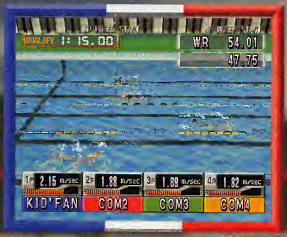
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

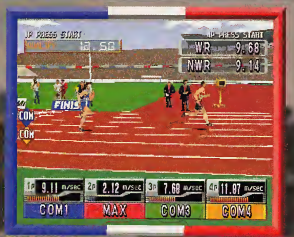
AVAILABLE - JUNE



CAL CAVALIER

HEY, I SPEARED A UFO!







INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD



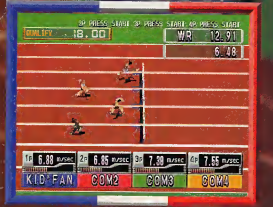


International Track and Field is Konami's fourth T & F game (for those of you who keep count) and all four games are excellent. The first two games were coin-op titles called *Track and Field* and *Track and Field 2*. The third game was an 8-bit NES conversion of the original arcade game. Konami is now using the 1996 Summer Olympic games in Atlanta to showcase this new title, and what a game it is.

Up to 4 players (via the multi-tap) can compete in 11 events (100-meter dash, discus throw, pole vault, javelin, triple jump, hammer throw, high jump, 110-meter hurdles, 100-meter freestyle swimming, shotput and long jump...whew!). The gameplay is classically simple fitting the *Track and Field* tradition. You have 2 run buttons (for the right and left legs) and an action button which activates an athletic command (jump, throw, hurdle, etc.) or trajectory when the need arises. In the 110 meter hurdle, you rapidly tap the run buttons for speed and hit the action button to hurdle. In the Hammer Throw event, tap the run buttons to gain as much rotating inertia as possible, hold down the action button to get the release angle you want and let go of the button to let









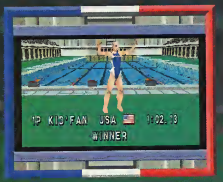














'er rip. You get the idea. The control is so simple, in sync and intuitive, you couldn't ask for anything more. So we know the gameplay is perfect, but how about the graphics? Well, take a look. Polygonal euphoria has been achieved. The animation is fluid and realistic down to the smallest detail. The entire game is in rich texture mapped 3D. As good as these polygons look in still shots, you've gotta' see 'em in motion to truly appreciate the realism (somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 fps).

Before each event, the camera zooms away from the scoreboard and pans around cinematically before following the player through the event. Literally every aspect of each event is played out in dramatic style. The live announcer is a tad on the used car salesman side and the music (while good) is a bit repetitious. But you won't care. You'll be to busy flashing back to playing the NES version years ago realizing just how far we've come.

Even with its blazing graphics and gameplay *IT&F* also doesn't take itself to seriously. In what other summer Olympic game can you knock down a UFO with a javelin or induce a gopher to surface and screw up your triple jump? In this case, the wackiest and the best are one and the same. -Cal









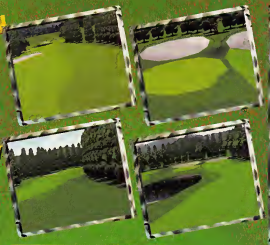
PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI
PUBLISHER - KONAMI
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - SUMMER



CHIP
I'LL NEED A NEW GOLF CART...





FLY-BYS
LOOK BEFORE YOU SWING!

Konami Sports continues its non-stop roll, with not one but two spectacular sports titles this month. As if *Track & Field* wasn't enough, (my fingers look like Ball Park Franks) here comes the golf game of my dreams. *The Final Round* is the first next-generation golf game to make proper use of the PlayStation hardware. Besides having detailed texture mapped golfers, an array of the finest features and three modes of play, *TFR* scales like a banshee.



From the pre-tee fly-bys to the real time ball cam this game is practically always in motion. Gone are the boring streamed bg's with a piece of cotton representing the ball. Goodbye forever! Also noteworthy are the cool reflections over water hazards and the many available camera angles, all of which prove useful. *TFR* isn't quite finished yet, but as soon as it is, I'll explore each and every fairway.



TOGGLE YOUR VIEWPOINT ANYWHERE ON THE COURSE
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DEVELOPER - OCEAN
PUBLISHER - OCEAN
FORMAT - 32 MEG CART.
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER







Lobo

Lobo, the popular DC anti-hero comic book character, is making his first video game appearance in a brand new fighting game. Hitting stores this summer, *Lobo* is Ocean's first venture into the one-on-one fighting game arena.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Lobo, listen up. Developed in 1993 by DC Comics, Lobo is a futuristic cigar-smoking bounty hunter who's as tough as nails. Traversing the galaxy in a rocket powered Harley-Davidson, he seeks out the jobs nobody else has the guts to take. Formerly employed by the notorious Vril Dox, Lobo is now on his own, searching the galaxy for wanted criminals, and is willing to do whatever it takes to collect the bounty. They include: Loo, Nitro, Shaola, Kringle, his arch-enemy Vril Dox and even a clone of Lobo himself.

Ocean created Lobo on Silicon Graphics workstations, using Alias PowerAnimator software to render the graphics. In fact, the entire game is 100% rendered. Each of the game's six core characters have been motion-captured from live actors.

There are four modes of play in *Lobo*: solo, versus, tournament and practice modes. Solo mode is the "Story Mode" in *Lobo*. Players can only select Lobo as he hunts



K.LEE
THIS IS FRAGGIN' GOOD!















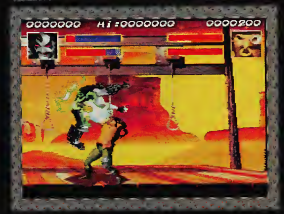

down all his adversaries including Vril Dox. Versus mode is your garden variety *Street Fighter/Killer Instinct* 2 player mode. In the tournament mode, up to 8 players can compete at once (sequentially, of course) and the practice mode is similar to the practice modes in *Killer Instinct* on the SNES, *Street Fighter Alpha* on the PlayStation/Saturn and *Tekken 2* for the PlayStation. In this mode, players can hone their skills by beating up an enemy with infinite life.

Although our preview cart featured all the backgrounds and every character , not all the moves are in yet (more than 27 different fighting moves per character are planned). The game balance and play control remain to be seen. With both a Genesis and SNES version nearing completion, a Lobo review shouldn't be to far around the corner. 16-bit just keeps on going, and going, and going... Fine by me!















REVIEW

GENESIS

DEVELOPER - PROBE
PUBLISHER - SEGA
FORMAT - 16 MEG CART.
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - HARD!
AVAILABLE - JULY/AUGUST



Jace Fury
Bring a lot of carrots, you may be here awhile.



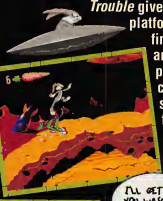




Probe, the makers of such next-gen excellence as the *Die Hard* and *Alien* trilogies have returned one last time to pay homage to the once-mighty Genesis. Their game, *Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble*, is disturbingly reminiscent of the once mighty Genesis platforming legacy. *Double Trouble* has enough original features and brain-burstingly difficult game-play to tear you away from your Saturn... for a little while at least.



Bugs may not be the most exciting character to hit the Genesis, but we are talking about a childhood legend here. Of course today's youth (and adults alike) have ultra cool cartoon characters like Earthworm Jim, Pinky and the Brain, Animaniacs and so on, but when Bugs was in his hey day he could have out witted them all. This and the fact that *Double Trouble* gives you one heck of a multi-engine platform challenge (this game redefines the term "Pro-Action Replay") are perhaps the game's strongest points... after making the world of classic Warner Brothers cartoons safer for all, you can truly claim to be a gaming master.











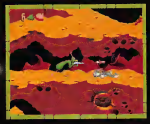








All the levels are based on classic Bug Bunny cartoons, so you can expect to see tons of wacky antics from your favorite WB characters including Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam, and my personal fave, Marvin the Martian (in later levels you can even pilot his spaceship!). In each stage, your mission remains pretty simple: Avoid your enemies while attempting to collect certain items: keys, fuel canisters, and yes, even a singing sword! Levels include plenty of strategy as well, as items tend to be hidden quite well, and an ever-present time limit ticks away. I hate time limits.



Both the graphics and sound are fairly cool; not too flashy, but remember, we're talking 16-bit. Two years ago we'd of freaked out. Later levels incorporate some pretty cool 3-D scaling and other effects seldom seen on the Genesis. *Double Trouble* is no token release.



If you're a fan of classic WB goodness or just looking for a (really) challenging Genesis game, you can't go wrong. This is one of the last 16-bit platformers, (it is, isn't it?) a genre that is steadily...well, going away. Now's your chance to experience one of the final examples of games gone by. That's all, folks! -Jace Fury















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REVIEW

GENESIS

DEVELOPER - BLACK PEARL

PUBLISHER - T•HQ

FORMAT - 16 MEG CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - JULY







CAP'N SNAPPY

Death, being the evil dude he is, wants nothing more than to destroy Life. So, instead of attacking directly, he sends his minions to do battle with those that fight for Life. This has been happening for many centuries, and Death's grown tired of the game. It's time for his ultimate revenge. He's assembled all the dead warriors that dared to face him in the past, present, and future, and plans to force them to fight each other until only one stands. Then the champion would have a chance to fight against Death, for everlasting immortality.



Yeah! That story made perfect sense! The scary thing is it might be the best part about *Time Killers*. I remember playing this game in the arcades years ago, transfixed by the amount of blood and gore. "You can cut their body parts off!" I screamed in my fighting game innocence. It seemed amazing at the time. Of course, today I look for other aspects in a fighter... You know, things like good graphics and solid play control. Believe it or not, the very things *Time Killers* is missing.



There's a very fine line between *Time Killers* and 8-bit, and I'm not sure if I've ever seen worse on the Genesis. The eight selectable characters are small and have almost no animation. The colors are bland. Everything in the game looks FIERCELY ugly. So ugly, that if *Time Killers* were a person you've have their family killed out of pure disgust. I mean, you can *count* the number of colors on-screen; I saw about 20, maximum. Beyond this, the fighters themselves control so terribly that the entire game degrades to slamming one button as fast as possible. The sound samples and "music" were so bad, I couldn't stand having the volume up for more than a few minutes. This is nothing more than a terrible translation of a terrible arcade game. Its only appeal was the violence level, which is almost comical when compared to the *Mortal Kombat* series. And now, thanks to one of the worst translations in the history of videogaming, it's even worse at home. I simply cannot convey just how terrible this pathetic excuse for a fighting game is. *Time Killers* is the first title in years that's actually given me physical pain. Stay as far away as humanly possible. - Cap'n Snappy











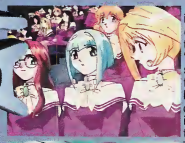


ANIME FAN

TAKUHI'S

BATTLE SKIPPER

Battle Skipper is a cute little series designed along the same lines as *Project A-Ko*... You know, take everything cliche about anime and amplify it to a ludicrous degree. Though *Battle Skipper* occasionally loses sight of its humor and turns into a vehicle for selling action figures to Japanese kids (tell me the Battle Skippers weren't designed expressly with toys in mind!), it's still a fun half hour or so.





Here's the story. St. Ignacio's School For Girls is home to two clubs, the evil Debutante Club (whose clubhouse is bigger than the entire rest of the school) and the heroic Etiquette Club (where "the first rule is strength, the second rule is strength, and there is no third of fourth rule, but the fifth rule is strength."). Their conflict extends far beyond the schoolyard, though, as their wealthy club presidents are the daughters of two giant military contractors... The kind of girls who are driven to school in battle ships and have dinner with cabinet ministers.

The dialogue gets pretty lame during the "Battle Skipper" fights, but otherwise, there's more than a handful of good laughs in here.







MEMORIES

We last previewed *Memories*, Katsuhiro Otomo's new Japanese theatrical release, in Volume 4, Issue 3. It sounded awesome... a 3 story omnibus film by the man who brought us *Akira*, full of Otomo's characteristically offbeat imagination. It seems a bit premature to revisit *Memories* so soon, but I do so with two bits of good news: One, an American release seems imminent, and Two, it truly is worth all the hype.

Or at least, the first story is. The 45 minute long first episode, "In Her Memories," (subtitled "Magnetic Rose") is so spectacular that I had to turn the tape off for an hour or so afterwards just to catch my breath. Unfortunately, I needn't have bothered to turn it back on... The other two episodes are a long drop downhill from there.

I know that sounds like a contradiction of the first paragraph, but if you'd seen "In Her Memories," you'd understand... This 45-minute masterpiece is more than capable of making up for the remainder of the film. The story is brilliant, the animation quality is unprecedented, and the spooky operatic soundtrack (by Yoko Kanno of *Macross Plus* fame) ties it all together beautifully.

I can't tell you much of the story without ruining some of the magic, so here's the generic plot summary: A spaceship travelling through a debris-filled area of space receives an SOS call from a mysterious space station shaped like an... um... No, wait, I can't tell you that part. Anyway, two men go aboard to look for the source, and find what appears to be an empty opera hall that's haunted by holograms of a famous opera diva who died centuries ago.









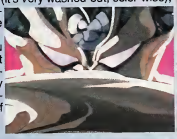






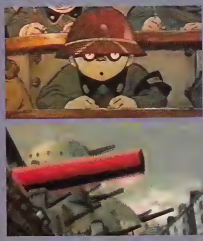
Guyver was, I believe, one of the first animated series released in the states, and I had assumed that this was just a re-release. But in fact, this is the first American release of the 1994 Japanese "remix" of the now 12-year old *Guyver* series... Same names, pretty much the same characters, but some very different storyline twists and some totally new animation.

Though *Guyver* fans may enjoy seeing yet another new take on the series, there really seems to be no beating the original (In my opinion, the live action movie starring Mark Hamill was the DEFINITIVE *Guyver*! Hrrrmmpphhh... PWAHAHAHAHA! Whew, couldn't keep a straight face on that one, but had to try... Heh heh... Anyway...). The new *Guyver* series has comparatively disappointing animation (it's very washed-out, color-wise), and really poor English dialogue. It does have some awesome cover art, though.



If you're new to *Guyver*, you might want to take a look, but whether it's the new or old version, *Guyver* seems pretty dated and cheesy in comparison to the majority of the stuff out there.





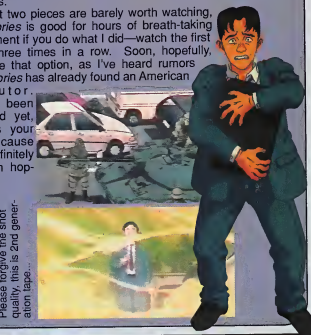
That's all I can say, except to add that what happens next (the first 15 minutes are pretty slow) is 30 of the most disturbing, thought-provoking, and suspenseful minutes of brilliance I've ever seen. The animation is exquisite, and Koji Morimoto's directing skills have no peer.

Surprisingly, "In Her Memories" is the one that Katsuhiro Otomo had the least to do with. Whereas he scripted, designed and directed the final piece (and did a number of things on the second), he's credited only with the original idea for the first.

"The Stinkiest Weapon" (English subtitle: Stink Bomb) comes next, as an attempt at comic relief between the two far more serious stories. Similar in style to Otomo's recent *Roujin-Z*, but a thousandfold darker, "The Stinkiest Weapon" is the story of a man who is inadvertently killing just about every living thing in all of Japan, but is too dense to realize it. The setup is good (a young salaryman working at a pharmaceutical company takes a pill that turns him into a living chemical weapon, thinking it's a cold pill), but it drags on way too long, and never really achieves any of the humor it seems to be striving for.

The last, "Cannon Town" (English subtitle: "Cannon Fodder") is the most disappointing. It has a powerful soundtrack and some very interesting animation techniques, but falls way short in the plot department. Hell, I'm giving it too much credit by suggesting it even *has* a plot department... Cannon Town is just a setting, admittedly a very cool one, but one in which nothing ever actually happens.

The last two pieces are barely worth watching, but *Memories* is good for hours of breath-taking entertainment if you do what I did—watch the first episode three times in a row. Soon, hopefully, you'll have that option, as I've heard rumors that *Memories* has already found an American distributor. Nothing's been announced yet, but cross your fingers, 'cause this is definitely one worth hoping for.



Shots, from Left to Right, of "In Her Memories," "Cannon Town," and the "Stinkiest Weapon." Please forgive the shot quality, this is 2nd generation tape.



SPECIAL K's JAPAN NOW!



ANOTHER IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

Welcome to another month of Japan Now! I've been to Japan to do some investigative reporting and believe it or not, the Nintendo 64 is not the big thing in Japan. When I was there in April, there weren't that many reservations for N64. I suppose this will change after the E3. We'll get started this month with one of the Japans finest programmers, Kan Naito of Climax...



Kan Naito Profile
D.O.B: 3/23/1967 Tokyo

Kan began visiting arcades daily at the age of 12. One day he realized that if he had a computer at home, he could play games there every day. So, he asked his parents to buy him a computer and soon became completely absorbed in video games. He mastered BASIC on his own. In 1983, he debuted as a professional programmer, at the age of 15.

Milestones
1987 *Dragon Quest 3 and 4* (FC)
1991 *Shining in the Darkness* (MD)
1992 *LandStalker* (MD)
1995 *Lady Stalker* (SFC)
1996 *Dark Savior* (in development)

AN INTERVIEW WITH CLIMAX CREATORS OF DARK SAVIOR

Interviewer: Special K
Interviewee: Mr. Kan Naito,
President and Main Programmer of Climax

GF: LandStalker *featured a main character with big feet and elf-like looks. The new character is more human and futuristic... Is* Dark Savior *related in any way to* LandStalker*?*

KN: No, not at all. There's no connection between the two games in storyline.

GF: LandStalker *used the Diamond Dimension System. Did you design a specific system for* Dark Savior *as well?*

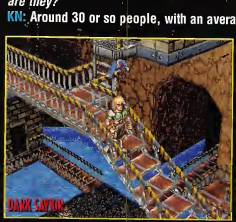
KN: Actually, yes. It's called the "Hyperion Perspective System."

GF: *Can you explain how it's implemented?*

KN: Well, there's no real way for me to explain this system within the pages of a magazine, but we didn't use the C++ development tools Sega supplied us with. We wrote the game with our own tools in Assembly, and consequently the calculation speed is much faster.

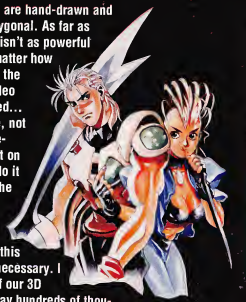
GF: *How many people worked on* Dark Savior *and how old are they?*

KN: Around 30 or so people, with an average age of about 27.



GF: *You have achieved the best polygon performance yet seen on the Saturn. As the character climbs within detailed environments there's no evidence of pop-up or breakup. Was this very hard to do?*

KN: Well, the characters are hand-drawn and the backgrounds are polygonal. As far as polygons go, the Saturn isn't as powerful as the PlayStation. No matter how blazing your program is, the speed of the Saturn's video chips can't be accelerated... It's an issue of hardware, not software. 3D perspective-changes are very difficult on the Saturn; you have to do it manually, in software. The tools Sega supplied are just too slow. By contrast, the PlayStation's Geometry Engine makes this kind of programming unnecessary. I forgot the actual specs of our 3D routine, but we can display hundreds of thousands of polygons per second. I'm pretty sure our engine is the fastest so far for the Saturn.



GF: *How much CG is in the game?*

KN: Just a few minutes worth of FMV.

GF: *Will you only be creating games for the Saturn? Do you have any future plans for other platforms?*

KN: We're interested in other hardware as well. As I said, our routine has maxed-out the Saturn video chip, so if we ever want to create a faster game, we'd have to work on other hardware.

GF: *How about the N64? Do you have any plans for that machine?*

KN: Uh, not at present.

GF: *From a creator's point of view, what do you think about the N64? Also, what hardware is the easiest to program on?*

KN: Of course, later systems will be higher-spec than earlier systems. As far as speed and expression go, I think the N64 will be easier to deal with, but we don't know much about that platform's development environment. No amount of incredible specs will make a game better on one system versus another if the development environments are poor. As far as the Saturn and PlayStation go, I'm not at all satisfied with their development tools.



GF: *What are the differences and the advantages between cartridge and CD?*

KN: Like I said, the development tools for the PlayStation and Saturn aren't that good, so if car-



tridges had a larger capacity for memory storage I'd be all for them. With CD-ROM we have to burn another version every single time we change something and want to test our game, but with a cartridge we can alter a single section of the game we're working on, so it's easier.

GF: Are there any plans to bring out Dark Savior *in the States? If so, will there be any differences between the two versions?*

KN: Actually, SOA's really pushing hard for this game, and it'll be at E3. The US version might be more difficult than the Japanese one.





GF: Do you have any comments for your fans in the US? When you create games, do you consider the US market at all?

KN: My creative roots lie in Hollywood movies. Since they are welcomed all over the world, I want my games to be welcomed globally as well. Finally, to the people who played *LandStalker*, I bet you had a hard time locating all the items and places. *Dark Savior* will bring back all the fun and anger you experienced in the first game, only better! (laughs) For those of you who've never played *LandStalker*, you'll have fun with this, too!

GF: Mr. Naito, we thank for your time. Good luck in the future and thank you for both *LandStalker* and *Dark Savior*! (Get a first hand look at the amazing *Dark Savior* on page 66.)

MORE JAPAN NOW NEWS...



EVIL RYU?!

In the current *Street Fighter Zero (Alpha)* comic book series in Japan, there are hints that the murderous wave of power that consumed Akuma's very being exists within Ryu. This is reinforced in many of the *Alpha 2* endings, which make reference to this power. The big rumor (well, it's not a rumor any more) in Japan is that this Evil Ryu is hidden in *Alpha 2*, and that supposedly this feature is only in the American version. Unfortunately, the powers that be at Capcom will not allow us to reveal the technique to choose Evil Ryu, but take a look at this new Ryu incarnation below. Other *Zero 2* rumors in Japan suggest that Guile and perhaps other *SFII* characters are hidden in the game as well. Try and discover the codes and send them in! We will provide the method to choose Evil Ryu next issue, so stay tuned!







NINTENDO ANNOUNCES NEW GAMEBOY

Nintendo has announced that they'll be releasing an even smaller version of the GameBoy called "GameBoy Pocket" on July 21st in Japan. The weight of the unit is one-half that of the original GameBoy and the price will be ¥6,800 ($68). The specs are the same as the original GameBoy, but it has a much clearer screen and you can play it for eight to ten hours on only two AAA batteries! This unit is, of course, compatible with all existing GameBoy titles. More information and shots next month!

IT'S THE LAW!

SCE of Japan is being investigated by the Fair Trade Commission because of their possible violation of the Antimonopoly Law. SCE had previously told all retailers of their game software to keep the price of PlayStation games no lower than their suggested retail price of ¥5,800 ($58). If wholesalers broke this rule and discounted any PlayStation games, Sony cut off their distribution. Even if the PlayStation games had no suggested retail price, i.e. an "Open Price," Sony indicated that going below ¥5,800 would not be in the retailers' best interests.

From the consumers' perspective, a discount is more than welcome, but third parties suffer if prices are dropped too low, so it's a pretty tough call to say who's right and who's wrong in this case.

Hey there, all! Please keep in mind that this column's being written two days before the E3 takes place, so the E3 coverage section of the mag is a lot more up to date than I am. Check there for the answers to questions I couldn't help with, or the true versions of answers I just made up!

Dear Postmelster,

I am a loyal PlayStation owner and a diehard RPG lover. I have some questions for you concerning the PlayStation and upcoming RPGs.

1) In your Volume 4, Issue 5 edition of GameFan you said SQUARE would be releasing games for the PlayStation as early as Autumn, and in another article you said that it would be as soon as June. I was just wondering which was true.

2) Does SQUARE have any other *Final Fantasy* games in the works other than *Final Fantasy VII* (say, *FFVIII*)?

3) It doesn't seem as though many PlayStation RPGs are in the works by many companies. Is *Wild Arms* going to be as long as *FFVII* (2 CDs)? And is Sony making it? I wasn't sure about that.

4) I was on the WWW the other day and I stumbled across the Unofficial Square Home Page and they had *Arc the Lad* listed under their game titles. I thought it was made by G-Craft. Which is true?

5) Other than RPGs, my favorite games are shooters like *Virtua Cop*. Is there a PlayStation game that is coming out with a gun, or do you have to buy it separately?

6) Are *Arc the Lad 2*, *Wild Arms*, or *Genso Suikoden* ever going to be released in the US?

7) And finally, I know SQUARE is going to make 20 games before the end of 1997, but how many of those 20 will be making their way to us? This is really concerning me.

Matt Gross & Taylor Woodward
Columbia, MO

1) June seems really unlikely, although the arcade version of Tobal 2 *(which SQUARE is publishing, but did not make) might hit around then. Other than that, you'll have to wait till much later in the year.*





2) We've heard many rumors about re-releasing the first 3 or 4 FF games on PlayStation, but nothing official.

3) Wild Arms *is being published by Sony, yes... It's actually by the team that made (uck!)* Gunners Heaven. *There's a twist! It's only one CD, but you shouldn't view that as a judgment of length... FFVII is 2 CDs because of the amount of FMV sequences it has.*

4) G-Craft (who did make Arc the Lad*) was started, it seems, by people from SQUARE, and SQUARE may own a portion of the company. It's quite a leap to see that as SQUARE making* Arc*.*

5) Sony's painfully dull Horned Owl *(in Japan) came with Konami's pretty cool gun, and it is due to be released here (packaged together or not, I'm not sure) just in time for* Die Hard Trilogy*.*

6) Hopefully some of these games will be announced at the E3...

7) Who knows? SQUARE is under new management in that area (meaning that different people are deciding what comes out here), so there is hope... But their less than ambitious schedule on translating Final Fantasy VII *(8 months!?) worries me a bit.*

Dear GameFan,

I am writing to not only ask several questions, but to also let you know of my intention to re-subscribe and why. You see, last year I let my subscription run out because I did not like several things I saw happening to my favorite video game magazine. I've been checking you guys out ever since Volume 1, Issue 6, and I had always been impressed with your extensive coverage and unbiased opinions. Hell, I bought the Sega-CD version of *Batman Returns* due to your advice (at a time when everyone was knocking it) and thanked you for every minute of it. But, eventually, a few negatives arose.

There was the raise in price, the sudden kissing up to all things Nintendo (please, if not for the poor sales of *MK1*, blood would still be banned. I honestly view their change in policy to be a result of profit, not care for the gamer. And by the way, except for the new *Mario* game, I've yet to see anything for the Nintendo64 that even makes me want to take a second look at the Titanic of video game systems), and worst of all, the hiring of that Lord of Sega-bashing, Slasher Quan. I was disgusted by what I viewed as the selling out of my previous source of game info.

However, recent issues have returned to the GameFan of old (and it appears that the loser is gone), and though I may disagree with a few things you may have printed (I happen to like *Toshinden Remix*, and don't find *Street Fighter Alpha* or the Virtual Boy particularly exciting), I can see that the honesty has returned. Now, on to my questions:

1) Is there any hope for SQUARE to sign with Sega? I would kill for a Saturn *Final Fantasy* and the deal with Sony seems like a glimmer of hope.

2) Will *Tashinden 2*, *Doom*, *Policenauts*, *Resident Evil*, *Street Fighter Alpha 2* (which looks a lot more promising than the original), *Marvel Super Heroes*, *Tekken 2* (which I hate, but a friend of mine with a Saturn was curious about), *Fatal Fury Real Bout* or *Soul Edge* EVER come out for Saturn?

3) Why do you have such a big sports section when there are so many cool RPGs you could cover? There can't be that many people into *NBA Jam*.

4) Will there ever be a Genesis/Sega-CD adaptor for the Saturn so I can still play my favorites but get rid of my fifty thousand different pieces of hardware?

5) Will *Devil Summoner* be heavily censored (after all, Atlus took out the GOD/DOG part of *Crusader of Centy*)?

6) Wouldn't it be cool to see a *Lunar* prequel? You know, when everyone was young? It'd be cool to see what Alex was like. Any word on *Part III*? What about a 32-bit update of the original *Phantasy Star*?

7) Could you guys cover games without showing too much of the game, especially plot twists? The *Lunar 2* review spoiled a big surprise (a certain white-haired, pointy-eared villain's return) and the PS *Snatcher* review gave away almost the entire story in its pictures.

8) Finally, is there an un-censor code for the Sega-CD version of *Snatcher*? Another magazine printed a code that didn't work. If there is such a code, I'd appreciate it if you let *me* in on it.

Joseph Piantadosi
New Hyde Park, NY

Thanks for the kind words! As for the questions:

1) There's some hope, but not too much. They seem really committed to PlayStation, and I wouldn't be surprised if there were some back door dealings behind their new-found loyalty, if you know what I mean…

2) Toshinden 2 - *Possibly.* Doom - *Probably not.* Policenauts - *YES.* Resident Evil - *No.* Street Fighter Alpha 2 - *YES.* Marvel Super Heroes - *YES.* Tekken 2 - *No.* Fatal Fury Real Bout - *YES (in Japan at least).* Soul Edge - *No.*

3) Because the sad fact is, for every RPG released here there are about 30 times as many sports games released.

4) I really doubt it. You should check used game stores to see if they have any CD-Xs. That's Sega's ultra compact Genesis/Sega-CD combo that also functions as a portable CD player. It's the ideal solution!

5) The question is, will Devil Summoner *come out at all? Atlus has thrown their weight behind the newer* Megami Tensei *game,* Persona, *for the PlayStation. If* Devil Summoner *does come out, it won't be this year.*

6) It would be nice… From what we've heard, GameArts is trying to catch all their Saturn owners up on the series, and after the redone Lunar *(which is mostly being done by Kadokawa Shoten, under the guidance of GameArts) will follow a redone* Lunar 2*, and then the new* Lunar 3*. The* Lunar *team themselves are currently at work on a new, non-*Lunar *RPG… Should be very cool!*

7) Sorry! We'll try to be more careful…

8) I'm afraid that such a code doesn't actually exist…

Dear Postmeister,

I'm a Sega Saturn owner who appreciates 2D games as much as the next guy (hence the reason why I bought the Saturn), but lately I have felt the need for a 3D fighting game. I know, I know, pick up *VF2*… I did. I want another 3D fighting game that is just as good, if not better than *VF2*. So my question to you is; when are we Saturn owners going to get another good 3D fighting game? I also have some other questions to be answered:

1) I want *Darkstalkers 3*!

2) How can I get ahold of the song that went into the PlayStation version of *Darkstalkers*? (Trouble Man… or some-

The Postmeister doesn't usually print game artwork (that's Terry's jurisdiction) but a comment I made in Volume 4, Issue 5 about a shortage of female gamers drew a pretty large response from a demographic the Postmeister didn't even know existed. In the past, most women have tended to write in about RPGs, but all of a sudden we're getting a ton (well, um, three. But that's still a lot more than I knew existed) of letters from female Capcom fans. And they're amazing artists, too!

Dear Postmeister,

It seems that all they ever talk about these days is "3D this and 3D that." Everyone is favoring polygon and 3D-type games. Now I don't know about you, but that really ticks me off! Why? Because I'm probably one of the biggest fans of 2D games out there! I personally thing that 2D games are the best. Just take Capcom (my favorite company) for example. They make the most awesome games in the universe! The quality of animation, art, and graphics are unparalleled by anyone else in the industry. Hand-drawn 2D art is (in my opinion) the absolute greatest. I know some others will think I'm completely insane, but to tell you the truth, I really don't like 3D games. I hate polygons because everything looks so artificial and lifeless. They don't have the vibrancy and dynamic look that 2D can give.

Now my worry is, with the way the industry seems to be heading, will there still be a good, strong market for 2D games? Or will the entire video game market be eventually overrun with 3D rendered polygon puppets? Will awesome companies like Capcom still produce their legendary masterpieces like *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* in all their incredible 2D glory? Will such companies continue to create such bliss? Or are we (the 2D gaming fans) a dying breed?

And another thing… I know I'm considered a minority in the video game world because I'm a girl who adores fighting games, especially *Street Fighter*. But I'm getting kinda sick of hearing about "game babes." How about game hunks? I mean, even though girl fighting game fans are a minority, it doesn't mean we don't exist. What about our tastes? For instance, I worship Capcom's artwork so I recently was lucky enough to track down a copy of Capcom Illustrations, but was quite dismayed to find that Chun Li seemed to be the main focus of every page! Yes, Capcom, I love you, but I really don't like how you overfavor Chun Li (or any other girl for that matter). Personally, I'd like to see a lot more pictures of Guile; he's hot stuff! Now there's a real game hunk! I'm sick of seeing an overload of Chun Li, Ryu, and Ken; let's get some more Guile in there!

Okay, by now you've probably heard enough of my babbling, but I really appreciate your taking time to listen to my concerns. Oh, and one last thing—I think it would be great if you guys made a pen pal column in your magazine. I'd love to get connected to other fellow gamers who love *Street Fighter* as much as I do (and even better if they were a Guile fan), boy or girl, any age. And fear not, all you males out there I am NOT a feminist. Thanks for your time!

Ye old Looney Toon,
Jen Seng
Westborough, MA

Jen! The GameFan staff was starting to worry… It's been so long since we've heard from you! Jen's always been a Wolfinger's Wall regular, but with this hyper-cute masterpiece, you're officially an honorary staff artist… Why, just look at Akuma! Awww…

Anyway, thanks for the letter! We'll think about the pen pal column, but for now we decided it would be better not to print your address, lest you get deluged with mail from every male Street Fighter *fan across the country (heck, half the staff of GameFan intends to write to you…). PS: Not to brag or anything, but the Postmeister's frequently referred to as a "short, hairless, hunchbacked Guile." Tempted?*

Oh, and to all the other artists who have been sending stuff in and wondering what's happened to Wolfinger's Wall, don't worry! Terry's returned from a brief hiatus and the Wall should be back up next month. In the meantime, the Postmeister has been enjoying watching all of your art (some of it is astounding!) flow in, so keep it coming!

That's Jen's art below, and to the left, two beautiful pieces from Sarah Combs (Kettering, OH).

Sorry there wasn't room for your letter, Sarah, but I can assure you that there will probably never be a PS-X *Nightwarriors*. Sorry… Oh, and before the PlayStation came out, they were considering calling it the PS-X, which is why lazy typists like myself abbreviate it as such. Thanks for the art!

To Jennifer Call: Sorry we couldn't fit it in here (the scanner destroyed your artwork, I'm afraid), but thanks for the submission!







thing)
3) How can I acquire the color black for my favorite characters in *NightWarriors*?
4) Are there any other tricks to *NightWarriors*? How did you get the picture of Morrigan that you had right above Takuhi's rating in Vol. 4, Issue 5?
5) When is *SFA2* scheduled to come to the home platform systems?
6) Is it possible for there to be an upgrade add on cart for *UMK3* to become *UMK3+* on the Saturn?

When are Saturn owners going to get another good 3D fighting game? You mean, BESIDES Criticom*? (Ha!) Heh heh... Anyway, that would probably be* Fighting Vipers *or* Virtual On *(what do they call it here?* Cyber Troopers *or something), both are coming within the year, and both are pretty damn good...*
1) It's in development! CPS3, maybe?
2) The question is, WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO? I'm sure they released it in Japan as a single or something, but the trouble you'd have endure to get it would hardly be worth the pain of having to hear it, even for the most severe of masochists.
3) When you choose your character hold X and B for controller 1, or Z and B for controller 2.
4) To get Morrigan's hidden win poses, hold all three punch or all three kick buttons when you win. And there are a ton of other tricks... we're publishing a book on it that should be out in a month or two...
5) December-ish.
6) It's possible.

Dear Posty,
I think it's about time for letter 18, and away we go. Of course, no letter would be complete without mentioning what a fine job you guys at GF are doing. I have no idea what you dudes eat over there, but don't change a thing.
Anyhow, here's my Q's for this one:
1) Please show more *Wild Arms*! This RPG looks awesome, and I certainly hope it finds its way over here one way or another. Is it even scheduled for a US release? (It better be!)
2) Well, I've saved just about $300, and it's going towards the Nintendo 64. I just hope it arrives in September like they say, I'm personally tired of all the delays. It better be worth it, I worked my butt off for the cash. Are you guys sure it's the greatest thing ever? I need to know!
3) Will you please ask Nick to review *Dragon Quest VI*? I wish he would, as no mag really ever had much to say about it. Is it the best RPG of all time, or what? Give us the answer, Nick!
4) What would you rate *Beyond the Beyond* for the PS, on a scale of 1-10? I'm gonna get it, as I just can't get enough RPGs. I heard the battles are too close together. Has this changed for its US debut?
5) Please show as much N64 as possible! I hope at the E3 the Nintendo whiteshirts finally show everything. I wanna see real games and not just *Mario 64*. I gotta see *Kl, Zelda, Mario Kart*, and all those other games they've been promising. Hey, can they really bring the N64 out at $199? This would be terrific. That is, if it's even true. Oh, I went into a local chain store the other day, and I overheard the salesman trying to convince a customer to buy a PlayStation instead of a Saturn. He said that Sega is going under, and that Sony is going to dominate. While I won a PS and enjoy it, I don't think a salesperson should be biased to one machine in particular. That's not fair at all. Giving opinions is fine, but the customer didn't even ask the guy for one. It's just not right.
Werner Rackel,
West Covina, CA

Ah, poor Werner... I do indeed read each and every one of your letters (I have it so wired that I can just glance at the typeface and instantly tell when it's one of yours), and lucky #18 finally gets to see print. Now, to your Q's...
1) Everybody wants more Wild Arms*... Since it's Sony, a release is pretty likely, but since their turnaround on RPGs seems to be in the one YEAR range, let's hope a more ambitious third party will pick it up.*
2) We're certainly not saying that it's "the best thing ever," at THIS stage. We'll have to wait till we can actually sit down and play the games before we pass judgment. Not everyone here is as enthusiastic as K. Lee and the Enquirer, but we should all have an opinion by the time September 30th rolls around.
3) Here's the Postmeister's opinion: Boooorrrrngg! But then again, I only played it for 5 or 6 hours and never really liked Dragon Quest *to begin with. Anyway, I asked Nick, and he apologizes for the review being cut... He says it's the best* Dragon Quest *yet, but won't go so far as to call it the best RPG of "all time." There ya go...*
4) I'd give it a 3. WAY too many battles. We haven't seen the American final yet, so hopefully they've reduced the battles. It really does destroy that game.
5) We'll try!

A Quick History Lesson for *Genso Suikoden* Fans

I am an occasional reader of GameFan magazine, and I find your magazine (and your column especially) to be both informative and entertaining. One of the aspects of GameFan that makes it truly special is that it is one of the few American game magazines that pays close scrutiny to the gaming environment in Japan and Asia. GameFan interviews with Japanese game developers and its insight into the Japanese and Asian gaming community are done with rare sensitivity. However, on that note, I have a cultural criticism concerning your last Issue (Vol 4, Issue 5).

In your response to Brian Jones' question concerning the meaning of "*Genso Suikoden*," you were only half-right in the translation. It is true that "genso" means "imaginary, or fantasy," but "suikoden" does not mean merely an archaic form of "story." In fact, it actually refers to the famous Sung-dynasty Chinese classic "The Water Margin." This Chinese classic told a story of 108 (or 102, I forgot the exact number) run-of-the-mill people in ancient China who suffered persecution by the Imperial government for one reason or another. Not every one of these "heroes" were wholly innocent, but they were all treated unfairly by a social system that persecuted them because they were not from the aristocracy. This merry band of warriors (including a few very interesting female warriors), created their own sanctuary in a famous mountain and constructed their own society in which all members were basically equal, no matter their wealth or social class. The bulk of the story concerns their struggle against the Imperial government. Finally, the name "water margin" (which in Japanese is "suiko," the "den" part means simply "story") refers to the analogy between social and class equality and the water level (which remains flat no matter what the underlying topography is).

I'm sorry about the length of this explanation, but I think that the explanation will really help all those who enjoyed *Genso Suikoden* to understand the richness of its background, and what Konami was really trying to do with the storyline. On a related point, I would just like to point out that Data East's *Dark Legends* is also based on the same Chinese classic as *Genso Suikoden*, as is the old Koei PC game known in the states as *Bandit Kings of Ancient China*. If Brian Jones is really interested in *Genso Suikoden* and its background, there have been many English translations of *Suikoden*, with titles ranging from *The Water Margin* to *All Men Are Brothers* (the best translation I've read, which was translated by Pearl S. Buck). Anyway, keep up the good work, and I hope there are many more young (or old) gamers that will become interested not only in Japanese culture, but also Asian culture as a result of games such as *Genso Suikoden*.

Y.S.
New York, NY

We stand corrected! Thanks for the explanation—I'll have to pick up a copy to see how closely the two actually are related, but the storylines definitely sound VERY similar! Anyone else who catches anything we missed along these lines is encouraged to write in and share their knowledge... Games like this should be studied with the same care that was put into their creation.

Write to me if I'll run for President!

The PoStMeister
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Awaiting hot info from the show floor, this month's OS is, sadly, a press release salad.

US GOLD AND DOMARK COMBINE

Eidos Plc (Eidos Technologies, Domark Software, Big Red Software, and Simis Ltd.) has acquired CentreGold (CentreSoft, US Gold and Core Design) to form Eidos Interactive. The new group will be publishing games developed by Domark Software, US Gold and Core Design for Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation as well as for PC, Macintosh and Internet platforms. "Adding the US Gold product line to the Eidos group provides us with the opportunity to cover the entire gaming industry with a number of quality titles in different genres. With the expanded development teams at Domark and US Gold we're excited about what Eidos has in store for 1996 and beyond," explained CEO of Eidos US, Dominic Wheatley.

ACCLAIM AND NICHIMEN GRAPHICS SIGN TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

Acclaim Entertainment Inc. and Nichimen Graphics Inc. are working together to make next generation game programming faster and better. For more than three years Acclaim's Advanced Technology Group has been developing 3D character engine technology and with NGI's assistance, developers will now have a much easier time animating 3D characters in real time. NGI'S N-World was designed to take full advantage of Acclaim's motion capture technology as well as other motion capture systems and traditional animation techniques. A color reduction module was added, thus making N-World a complete solution for game developers. Wes Trager, the vice president of advanced technology for Acclaim said, "We strongly believe in Nichimen Graphics' products, strategy, and future in meeting the needs of game developers." Vice President of Nichimen Graphics, Kolchi Kobayashi, added, "This agreement with a major independent publisher gives us a tremendous technical edge in extending our market leadership with tools that afford a significant reduction in production time." The combined technologies will be used in developing games for such platforms as Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation, Nintendo 64, M2 and personal computers.

GT INTERACTIVE TO PUBLISH ATARI TITLES

Software Corp. has secured the exclusive rights to publish Atari titles on the PC and next generation platforms from WMS Industries, Inc. No financial details were available at press time. Among the titles optioned to GT Interactive are *Area 51*, *T-Mek* and *Return Fire*. There are also plans to create new PC versions of the Atari classics. Ron Chaimowitz, president and CEO of GT Interactive exclaimed, "We are pleased to strengthen and broaden our relationship with WMS Industries and bring to the market both the Atari titles that have become interactive entertainment classics and future titles from the Atari development group." GT Interactive has had much success with the PC version of the WMS-licensed *Mortal Kombat 3*. WMS Industries acquired Atari Games Corporation from Time Warner Inc. in March. GT Interactive plans to release the first WMS Industries title by the end of 1996.

MGM SIGNS DEALS WITH EUROCOM FOR *H.O.S.T.* AND SAFFIRE FOR *CYBERTHUG*

Interactive and Eurocom Developments, Ltd. of Derbyshire, England have signed a development deal for *H.O.S.T.*, a multiplayer action shooter for both Windows '95 and the PlayStation. In this arcade-style, top-down shooter players assume the role of an "intelligent and deadly host organism" that must rid a futuristic Earth from alien virus infected droids. Ron Frankel, executive Vice president and general manager of MGM Interactive claims, "Eurocom's proven success rate clearly represents its expertise in producing high quality action games like *H.O.S.T.* We expect *H.O.S.T.* to be one of the top games of 1996." Commercial director of Eurocom Developments, Ltd., Hugh Binns, explained, "We're excited at this opportunity to meld our experience in action-based game development with MGM's distribution and marketing resources." A Nov. 1996 release is scheduled for the PC CD-ROM version with the PlayStation version following in first quarter 1997.

MGM Interactive also signed a development deal with Saffire Corp. (formerly Cygnus Multimedia Productions, Inc. of Salt Lake City) for the action adventure game, *Cyberthug*. Based on a character in the upcoming MGM feature film *Fled*, *Cyberthug* takes the player on a 3D trip through cyberspace to battle cyber-enemies led by an evil computer hacker.

"Saffire's experience in creating titles with compelling gameplay and outstanding graphics is a great fit with MGM Interactive's expertise in character and story development," boasts Frankel. Les Pardew, founder of Saffire, Corp. adds, "We're looking forward to bringing an original, high-quality interactive entertainment experience to the masses with *Cyberthug*." No release date was available for either the PC or the PlayStation versions at this time.

3DO, 21st CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT ENTER JOINT AGREEMENT

21st Century Entertainment and The 3DO Company today announced a multi-year Affiliated Label agreement granting 3DO distribution right to all 21st Century titles for the PC. The first wave of products due out this summer include *Total Pinball 3D*, *Synnergist*, and *Pinball Construction kit*.

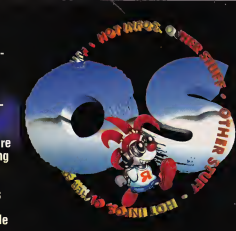
The 3DO Affiliated Label program is designed to offer a variety of services to help software developers broadly distribute and market their products in North America and the rest of the world. Program services include distribution, sales, and marketing support for companies developing interactive entertainment titles for the PC, 64-bit, and Internet platforms.

"We are extremely excited to be working with the impressive group of people at 3DO," commented Samantha Ryan, marketing manager, 21st Century Entertainment. "21st Century is committed to taking our development and marketing to the next level and our new relationship with 3DO will give us the access we need into a larger marketplace."

3DFX INTERACTIVE DELIVERS UNPARALLELED 3D GRAPHICS TO THE PC VIA OEM AGREEMENT WITH NEC TECHNOLOGIES

3Dfx interactive today announced that its Voodoo Graphics chipset will bring a new generation of interactive 3D graphics to the new NEC Technologies' PowerPlayer line for multimedia PCs. Under an OEM agreement between the two companies, Voodoo Graphics will be the 3D graphics engine for the new game machine, bringing visual realism, freedom of movement and frame rateS never before available in the PC market.

"This is an industry that is based on partnerships. NEC Technologies, like 3Dfx



Interactive, understands what it takes to bring the ultimate game experience to the market," said Ross Smith, 3Dfx Interactive founder and vice president of sales and marketing. "Together, we will deliver a combination of photorealistic 3D graphics, speed and interactivity that PC gamers have been asking for, for a long time."

The NEC PowerPlayer line consists of ultra-high performance multimedia PCs that feature the latest 3D and graphics technologies, sophisticated surround sound audio systems, award-winning software and gaming hardware accessories. With Pentium-based PCs rapidly becoming the gaming platform of choice over single-function game consoles, the PowerPlayer line is designed for serious gamers who demand the highest level of playing performance.

"NEC Technologies understands what the serious gamer wants and we are pleased to partner with 3Dfx Interactive to deliver a powerful multimedia system to the consumer market," said Murali Dharan, NEC's vice president and general manager, Desktop PCs. "Our initial foray into this market indicated that we are headed in the right direction. The PowerPlayer line has the performance to please even the most discriminating gamer."

"True 3D graphics on the desktop has arrived and will compete head-on with next generation 64-game systems," said Tim Bagarin, President, Creative Strategies, who in 1994 predicted that 3D graphics chipsets would make a PC display look almost as good as a high-end graphics workstation. "3D graphics will become a standard on PCs and game developers will create titles that take advantage of the special effects and features that are not available on other platforms."

PowerPlayer systems will be announced in June and are expected to be available through retail in the second half of '96.

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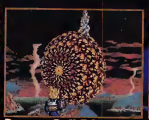
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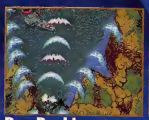
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Video Game Contest. Play on the hi-tech cutting edge with this line-up: Sony Playstation; Sega Saturn; Virtual Boy; 3DO; and Atari Jaguar. Get all five or trade the ones you don't want for CASH! Bonus options include: 33 inch monitor, $1,000 in games, cash, accessories and more!

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We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at $2.00 each and one tie-breaker at $1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 55% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid

		H				MYSTERY
			E			
P	I	N	C	H	W	WORD
		R				
S						

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCH .....W	PRESS.....K	BLAST .....A	WRECK .....D
BREAK .....Z	PUNCH .....S	SPRAY C	TURBO V
STOMP .....T	STAND.....R	PRESS .....E	DREAM ....O
CRUSH.....I	SCORE.....H	SLANT L	CHASE.....P

MYSTERY WORD CLUE:

WORLD RULERS HAVE IT AND IN THIS CONTEST YOU HAVE IT

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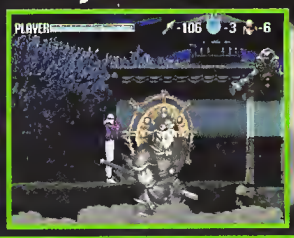
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SHINOBI LEGIONS SURVIVAL GUIDE

The following strategies should get you through the first five levels of Vic Tokai's Shinobi Legions for the Sega Saturn with a minimum of damage and 10+ lives in tow for the challenge ahead! Then, after you beat the game, you can flip this over and hang it on the wall somewhere to remind you what a superior gamer you are!




First, learn to block and deflect shurikens. These moves are key throughout the game!

Slice lanterns to uncover "Bishamon" and Life Balls. 10 Life Balls earns you a 1-Up. "Bishamon" guards you from attack.



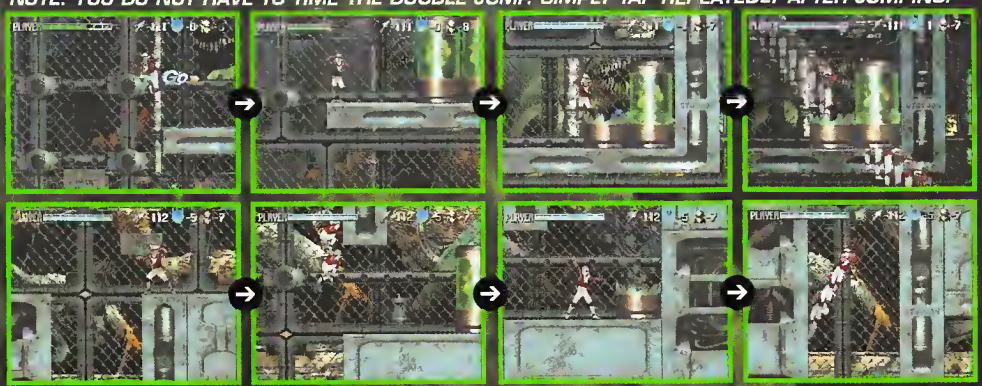




In Stage 2, scour the trees for Life Balls and magic. This easy level is a good place to gain strength.

The boss has two stages. In the first, simply block his shurikens and strike. In the second, destroy the idol heads then use your downward thrust (down + B while ascending) on the boss.

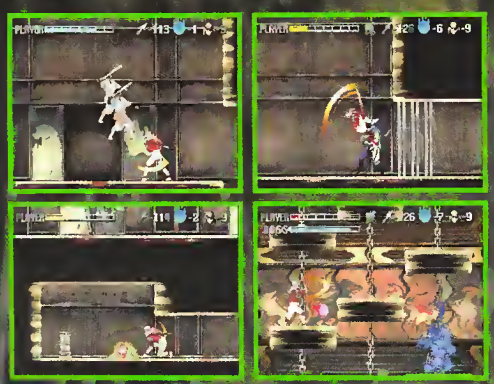
NOTE: YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TIME THE DOUBLE JUMP. SIMPLY TAP REPEATEDLY AFTER JUMPING.




There are two hard to reach areas in stage 3. The first requires a well timed double jump and leads to "Bunshin" which allows you six hits with no damage. The second leads to "Rairyu", Sho's fierce dragon spell.

The boss moves quickly so don't waste any time. Bounce off the floor with your downward thrust and strike him as he surfaces. Watch the brush to time your attack.

NOTE: MAGIC DOES NOT CARRY OVER WHEN YOU DIE SO USE IT IF YOU GOT IT!





In stage 5, block, then slash as enemies emerge. Double jump the first two gaps, stay on the cart for the third. Jump only for important icons.

Grab the "Rairyu" icon (top left illustration) and use it to roast the bomb squad. Without it they are nearly impossible to avoid. Try double jumping as soon as they appear if you do not possess the magic.

Level 4 hints: Slice enemies while they're airborne. Double jump/stab guardians when they're solid and search corridors for magic and power. Ricochet the boss' energy balls back at him and double jump when he electrifies platforms.



There is no stage 5 boss. Make it to the top and you're half way to saving Aya. Block a lot!

Shinobi Legions possesses something few 32-bit games have so far; great gameplay, superb control, and above all, length. These features incorporated with completely digitized graphics and quality cinemas take platform gaming to the next level. Good Luck!

NOTE: YOU CAN DISAPPEAR BELOW SCREEN LEVEL.

忍軍勢

SHINOBI LEGIONS

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